

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

London Recess Pictorial Issues

Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. Ltd, New Madden, Surrey, England initially printed the 2d. stamps in a four-pane format but because the colors were considered wish-washy and poorly aligned many of the stamps were rejected. The initial rejection of the first printings also was very likely politically motivated as the Controller of Stores still had 41 million 2d. King's Head stamps (171,000 four-pane sheets) in inventory, as recorded by the Post Master-General in his report to Parliament. Somewhat later when a shortage was looming the rejected 2d. stamps were accepted but only 591,840 of the 5.7 million printed were deemed acceptable. Those finally accepted had been printed in August 1925 but not issued until a year and a half later.

Only three dies were engraved; one for the vignette and one each for the language frames. There were four issues of the 2d. value produced by Bradbury, Wilkinson who printed the seven larger-sized values by the recess process, with three forms of perforations, all printed from the same interior and exterior plates. Issues 1 and 2 were printed in sheets of 240; Issues 3 and 4 in sheets of 120. To fit the plates to the printing press the 240 image plates were curved differently from the 120 image plates with the result that stamps from the former measure 27.75 x 22 mm. and the latter 27.5 x 22.25 mm. To allow for this stretching, spacing of the images and gutters on the plates is different. In the former the gutter widths are: horizontal 2.25 mm. & vertical 2.75 mm. and 2.5 each in the latter.

SG 34 Issues 1 and 1a. 2d. Grey and Reddish-Purple
Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. Size of stamp
is 27.75 x 22 mm. Perforation Group I. P 14

Issues 1 and 1a were printed from 240 image plates in four panes, each 10 rows x 6, that differ in one respect from all the others: the width of the vertical gutter is 16.5 mm. and there are nine perforation holes. This over-wide gutter was the result of an error in marking out of the exterior frame plate. As the spacing was correct on the interior vignette plate it was not possible to have the vignettes of all the stamps in the sheet correctly registered in their frames. The sheets were fed in at their right margin making it imperforate and the left margin perforated through. The top and bottom margins are imperforate except for a single hole at the end of the comb. Stamps from Issue 1 and 1a are indistinguishable except the vignettes from 1a are slightly better centered. A guide dot was added later in an attempt to improve centering.

March 7, 1927



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SG 34 Issues 1/1a. 2d. Grey and Maroon Shades

Four corner blocks of four



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SG 34 Issues 1/1a. 2d. Grey and Reddish-Purple
Controls & Varieties

Ca. Horizontal pair with 16.5 mm gutter between and with 9 perforation holes



Cb. Horizontal pairs with 16.5 mm gutter between and 9 perforation holes, with guide dot at top



V1-Oval perforations in Control Cb.

Cg. Inscription blocks

Inscription pairs are Union Handbook control stamps, and while not rare, they are certainly more difficult to acquire.



One guide dot above 2nd "l" of "WILKINSON" and a second over right limb of "SURREY", and four tiny grey dots "flight of birds" proves upper left Issue 1 (SACS)¹



A large dot under 2nd 'B' of Bradbury, upwards projection from feet of 'A' & line in 2nd 'N' of Wilk inson' proves Issue 1a (SACS)

¹ Various Printings of the 2d Union Buildings, pub. South Africa Collectors' Society, GB by R.D. Allen. Page 15-16.

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SG 34 Issues 1/1a. 2d. Grey and Reddish-Purple
Controls & Varieties



Frame impression dot level with bottom row of stamps at row 10/3 (Afrikaans)
and 11¼ mm directly above 2nd "l" of "WILKINSON" proves Plate 1a



V1-Oval perfs in a vertical setting; gutter
on right and 9 perforation holes proves
Plate 1/1a

Varieties



Vignettes misregistered low in frames
Reddish-purple frames prove Issue 1/1a

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SG 34 Issue 2. 2d. Grey and Maroon Shades
Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. Size of stamp
is 27.75 x 22 mm. Perforation Group I. P 14

Issue 2 was printed from a new 240 image, properly marked, exterior cylinder with a tiny black guide dot in the center of the gutter. The gutter was reduced from 16 to 15.5 mm. thus showing only eight perforation holes. The interior plate was the same as Issue 1 so that registration of the vignettes in the frames is usually correct. Like Issue 1 a guide dot was added later in an attempt to improve centering. Issue 2 material is the scarcest in mint condition and a large proportion are more likely from Issue 3, P 14.

January 1928



Control

Cd. Issue 2. Horizontal pair with gutter between
measuring 16 mm. with eight perforation holes



Cg. Issues 1 & 2 Inscription Pair

Inscription pairs are Union Handbook control stamps, and while not rare, they are certainly more difficult to acquire.



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London Recess Pictorial Issues

Because of the problems encountered in registering the frames in the four-pane format a switch to the two-pane format was tried for Issue 3. Thus, Issue 3 was printed in two 120-image panes with only eight perforation holes in the vertical gutter between the panes. There are two guide dots at the top of the gutter: one level with the top of the frames of the stamps and another 8.5 mm. above that. The top of the guide line in the bottom margin is approximately 11 mm. from the nearest corners of the stamps adjoining it. Like those of the two preceding issues, the stamps have only group I perforations. After marking out the flat plate and rolling in the frames and vignettes it was bent to form a semicircle to fit around the printing cylinder. With the four-pane forms the bending was from side to side, with the two-pane format it was top to bottom causing the small change in dimensions from 27.75 x 22 to 27.5 x 22.25 mm.

SG 34 Issue 3. 2d. Grey and Maroon Shades. Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. The size of the stamp is 27.5 x 22.25 mm. Perforation Group I. P 14

April 1928



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London Recess Pictorial Issues

SG 34 Issue 3. 2d. Grey and Maroon Shades

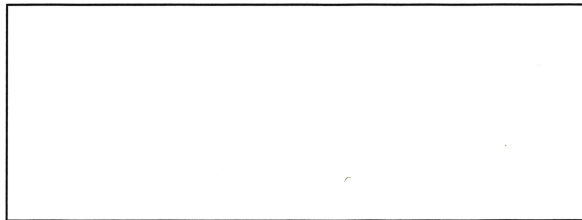
Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. Size of stamp
is 27.5 x 22.25 mm. Perforation Group I. P 14
Control

Ce. Bottom right corner block with part inscription



Issue 3 is proved by the small purple dot in the center of "F" of "AFRIKA"

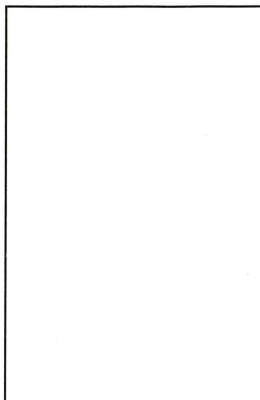
Cd. Issue 3. Horizontal top margin pair with
gutter between and two guide marks



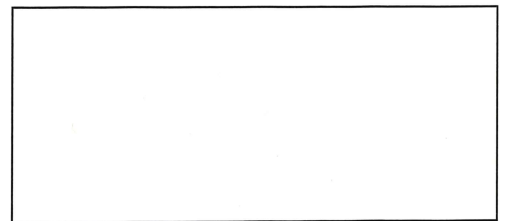
Varieties



V2-Inverted watermark



V1-Oval perms



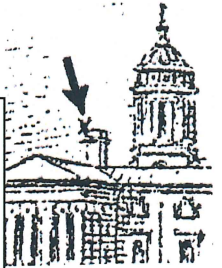
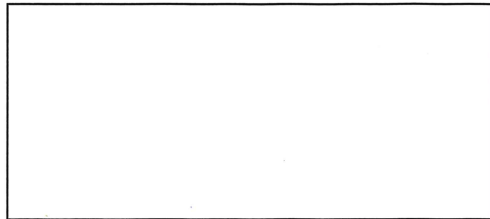
V3-Split "d" in "2d" Row 8/8 (8/2 right pane)

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London Recess Pictorial Issues

Issue 4 is the only issue of the 2d. stamps to have group I, II and III perforations. Stamps from Group I have eight perforations across the center gutter and in the parts of the sheets where they can be identified, are rare. There is only one guide dot in the top gutter and the guide line at the bottom is closer, only 8.5 mm. from the stamp corners. Produced from the same vignette plate as Issue 3 but a new frame plate

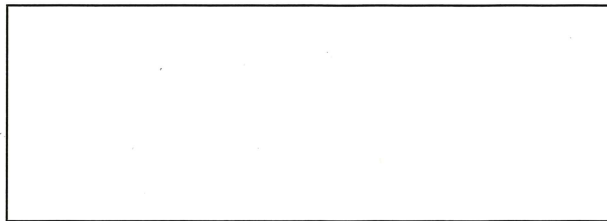
SG 34 Issue 4. 2d. Grey and Maroon Shades
Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. Size of stamp
is 27.5 x 22.25 mm. Perforation Group I, P 14
September 1929



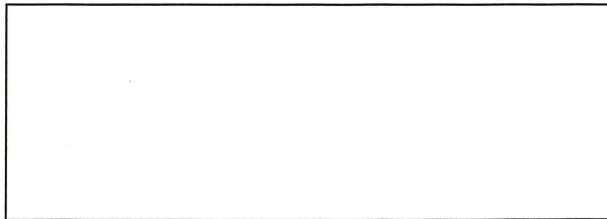
The "Windmill" flaw is a black mark on the left-hand chimney on interior plate 2 and is known only on Plate 4²

Controls

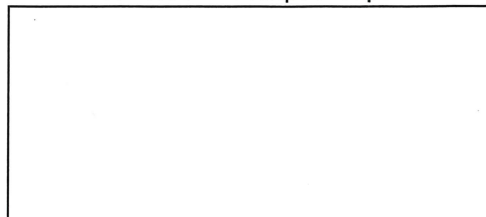
Cc. Issue 4. Horizontal pair with gutter
between, top margin with one guide dot



Cd. Issue 4. Horizontal pair with gutter
between, bottom margin with guide line
8.5 mm. from corners



Ce. Issue 4. Inscriptional pair



² The Union 2d. London Printing. Ibid. Page 6.

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London Recess Pictorial Issues

Issue 4 is also found with Group II and Group III perforations, and Group III perforations appeared before Group II. There is only one guide dot in the top gutter and the guide line at the bottom is closer, only 8.5 mm. from the stamp corners. The interior was the same, but with a variety that developed in the final printing: a flaw on the left top corner of the right-hand chimney, which from its shape has come to be known as the "Windmill Variety"

SG 34b. Issue 4. 2d. Grey and Maroon. Shades
Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. 27.5 x 22.25 mm.
Perforation Group III, P 14 x 13½ (Up)
A VERY SMALL PRINTING AND STAMPS ARE SCARCE

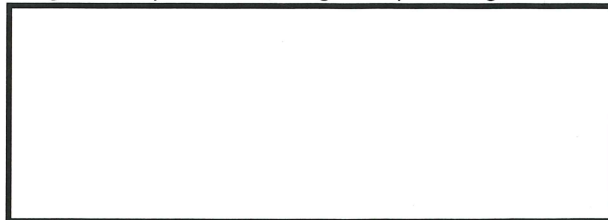
February 1930



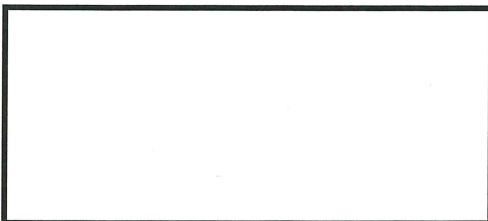
Mayville, Natal/18 JUN 1930

Control

Ca. Issue 4. Perf Group III (Up). Horizontal bottom pair with
gutter not perforated through with printer's guide line



Cb. Inscriptional Pair



Variety



V3-Split "d" of "2d" Row 8/8 (right pane 8/2)

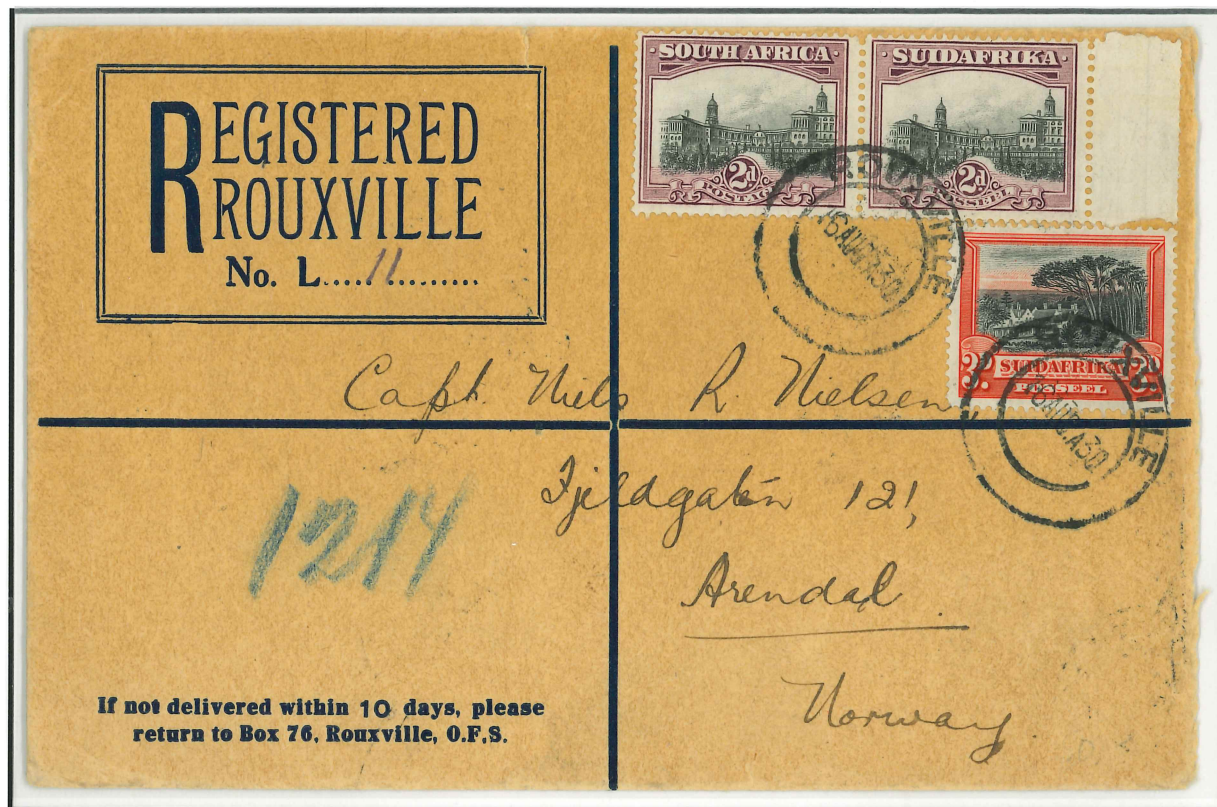
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

London Recess Pictorial Issues

SG 34b. Issue 4. 2d. Grey and Maroon

Perforation Group III, P 14 x 13½ (Up)

Registered official cover to Arendale, Norway bearing a pair of 2d right margin values and a single 3d (SG 35). Boxed "REGISTERED/ROUXVILLE/No. L 11 with "ROUXVILLE/16 AUG 30" cds on front and reverse, a "REGISTERED/BLOEMFONTEIN/17 AUG 30" double circle b/s and "ARENDALE/11.9.30" double circle receipt stamp. Cover printed with "If not delivered within 10 days, please return to Box 76, Rouxville, O.F.C."



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Inasmuch as the next stamps would soon be printed using the rotogravure process, requiring new plates, the old, worn-out plates were cleaned for one more round of production. This "cleaning" made the recesses slightly shallower and consequently the vignettes were a little paler in color than before.

SG 34b. Issue 4. 2d. Grey and Maroon. Shades
Wmk multiple Springbok's Head. is 27.5 x 22.25 mm.
Perforation Group II, P 14 x 13½ (Down)
September 1930



UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

London Recess Pictorial Issues

SG 34b. Issue 4. 2d. Grey and Maroon Shades
Controls

Cc. Issue 4. Perf Group II (Down)

Inscriptional Pairs with paler vignettes than earlier after "cleaning"



From plate 3. Dot 11½ mm. over "U" of "SURREY" (SACS at 9)

Variety



V1-Split "d" of "2d" Row 8/2



V3-Mark on side of right-hand chimney "Windmill"

Row 10/6 (right pane only)

V4-Missing perf hole between stamp and right margin



Vignette misplaced remarkably low in frame

12888 x