

British Guiana

THE INDEPENDENCE OVERPRINTS

British Guiana was the only British colony on the South American continent. On 26 May 1966, it became an independent member of the British Commonwealth with a new name, Guyana. On the same day, in addition to a set of four values commemorating the colony's independence (SG 408/11), stamps of British Guiana overprinted GUYANA/INDEPENDENCE/1966 were issued.

For the 1966-67 issues, the overprinting was done by De La Rue in London, initially using stamps printed on paper watermarked Mult. Script CA.



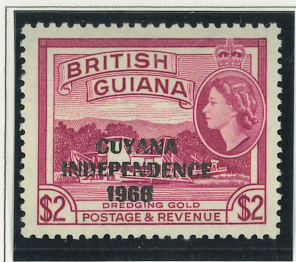
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The overprint was repeated on stamps printed on paper watermarked Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA, fourteen on paper with the watermark upright and eleven values with it sideways. This is the set with the watermark upright.



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In 1967 the Guyanan Post Office re-issued the Queen Elizabeth definitive set overprinted GUYANA/ INDEPENDENCE /1966, this time overprinted locally. Stamps with both watermarks were used. The following is the set with the Mult Script CA watermark.



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The set was also issued on paper with the Crown Block CA watermark. Not all the same values were produced; the 8c, 12c and \$5 were not used, however additional values were used viz. the 5c, 36c, 48c, 72c and \$1.



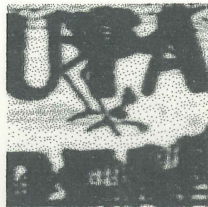
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Due to poor supervision in the Georgetown printing works, errors on these overprints abound. The best known Guyana overprint error bears an overprint which reads 1966/INDEPENDENCE/1966 instead of GUYANA/INDEPENDENCE/1966 (R7/10). This can be found on the Mult Script CA 2c, 3c and 6c.

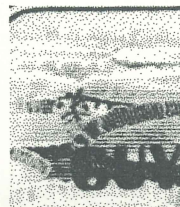


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As well as there being the overprint varieties there are stamps which themselves had flaws. On the 3c, firstly, there is the "Clubbed foot" flaw which is evident on the fourth stamp down in the first column; and secondly, also on the 3c, the "Weed" flaw appears on the third stamp down in the last column.



The "Clubbed foot" flaw



The "Weed" flaw



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The 1966/INDEPENDENCE/1966 error also appears on stamps with the Block CA watermark; this variety is very much less common than the Script CA stamps.



Another variety apparent on these issues is the displacement of the date horizontally on the overprint. These are firstly a displacement of the "1966" 2mm to the left (centre stamp in the bottom row) and secondly, a displacement 5mm to the right (visible on the right hand stamp on the bottom row).

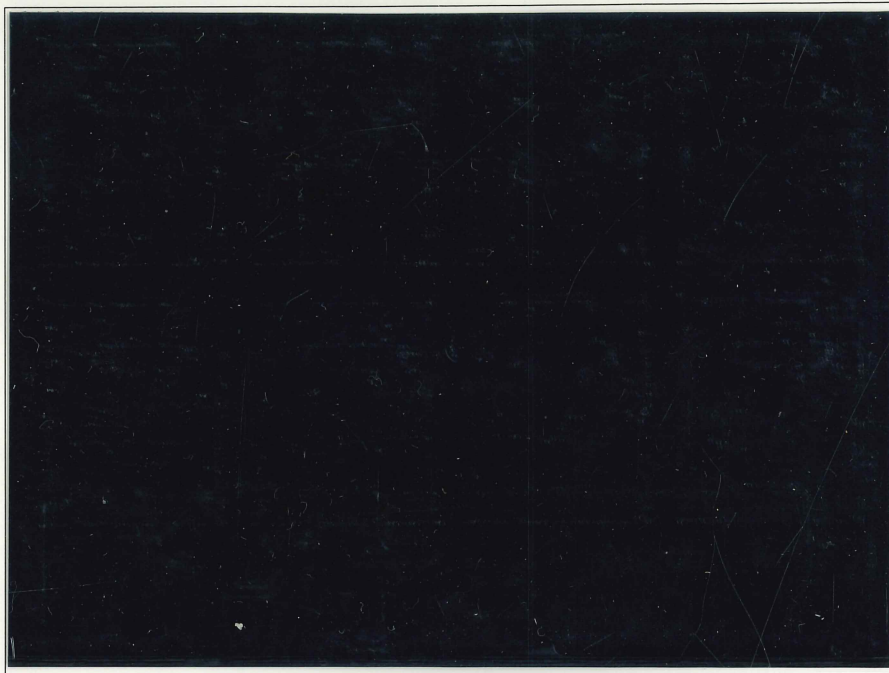




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Needless to say, there were examples of inverted overprints. On paper with the Script CA watermark these were on the 1c, 4c and 6c, and on the Crown Block CA watermark only the 3c. These examples are stamps watermarked Script CA.



Also, as what we would now call 'quality control' was practically non-existent, examples of displaced overprints abound. This is an example of the \$5 also on Script CA watermarked paper.



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Some 15 years later when the Guyanan Post Office found themselves short of funds as they often do, surplus stocks of the old Guyana Independence overprints were resurrected and treated to a further overprint to celebrate the Birth of Prince William of Wales.



Still later, in 1983, the surplus stocks were again dragged out of retirement to be overprinted to celebrate Commonwealth Day.

