

UPU British Commonwealth and Empire Specimen Stamps

1884 - 1948

Bob Myers

Historical Background

On May 18, 1878, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) met in Paris and adopted the regulation that UPU member countries transmit “a collection of their postage stamps” to one another. From December 1878 to June 1884, between 70 - 80 specimens of the Crown Colonies were distributed to UPU member countries as normal, unused stamps.

In 1884, the British General Post Office, which controlled the issuance of specimens, decided that all specimens would be distributed with a protective marking. For sixty four years, between 1884 and 1948, 100 to 756 stamps per issue were overprinted, stamped, or perforated “SPECIMEN”, and sent to Bern, Switzerland, where they were distributed to the postal administrations of UPU member countries.

From 1884 to 1928, stamps were overprinted or hand stamped SPECIMEN in various shapes and sizes from type set forms.

From 1928 to 1948, all stamps were punched with holes forming the word SPECIMEN. There were a few locally produced Provisionals that were overprinted or hand stamped in country.

UPU specimen stamps were classified by Marcus Samuel in 1976, and further refined by James Bendon. The Samuel numbering system is universally followed by specimen philatelists.

Purpose - The presentation shows the evolution of UPU protected specimen stamps sixty-four-year journey and shares key specimen examples, iconic sets and UPU protected specimen history.

Presentation Outline

- All distributed standard types from the five British printers (De la Rue (14), Bradbury/Wilkinson (9), Waterlow (10), Harrison(3) and Perkins/Bacon(2)) that supplied stamps to the UPU.
- All six Inland Revenue Hand stamps and overprint types.
- All local overprint and hand stamp types (will just share a few examples)
- Earliest distributed specimens by country.
- The fifteen specimens that were distributed by the UPU but were never issued.
- The last distributed UPU specimens.

Philatelic Importance - British Commonwealth UPU protected specimen stamps came into existence to keep member countries informed of another's officially issued postal paper. A very limited number of specimens were distributed, with many remaining in Postal Museums and archives. The following table outlines the specimen distribution history:

Time Period	Specimens distributed to each country	Total Specimens required for distribution	Specimen Type
Dec,1878 - June,1884	1	70 - 80	Uncancelled
June,1884 - March,1886	1	100	Overprint/Hand Stamp
April,1886 - June,1892	3	345	Overprint/Hand Stamp
July,1892 - Sept,1907	5	716 - 756	Overprint/Hand Stamp
Oct,1907 - Dec,1928	3	369 - 451	Overprint/Hand Stamp
Dec,1928 - Sept,1938	3	395 - 423	Perforated
Sept,1938 - July,1948	3	351 - 395	Perforated
After July,1948			Uncancelled

Plan -

Exhibit Plan	Page Number	Frame
Title/Plan	1.1	1
Specimen Distribution History	1.2 -1. 6	1
De La Rue	1.7 - 1.16	1
Bradbury, Wilkinson and Company	2.1 - 2.7	2
Waterlow & Sons	2.8 - 2.16	2
Harrison & Sons	3.1 - 3.3	3
Perkins, Bacon and Company	3.4 - 3.5	3
Inland Revenue	3.6 - 3.7	3
Local Overprints and Handstamps	3.8 - 4.10	3 - 4
Earliest Specimens	4.11 - 5.9	4 - 5
Distributed but never issued	5.10 - 5.11	5
Omnibus	5.12 - 5.14	5
Last UPU specimens distributed	5.15 - 5.16	5

Wherever possible, the UPU distribution date is shown, with the number of specimens required for distribution.

Only specimens listed in Stanley Gibbons are included.

I do not highlight watermarks or paper type, but focus on overprints, perforations, handstamps and rubber handstamp varieties.

UPU specimen stamps were classified by Marcus Samuel in 1976, and further refined by James Bendon in 2015 and 2021. The Samuel numbering system is universally followed by specimen philatelists.

Rare specimens and strips of multiples are highlighted in red.

British Crown Colony Specimen Stamps Distribution (1884-1886)

Specimens distributed from June 1884 to March 1886 are difficult to find. Only a single copy was sent to each member country of the UPU (100 specimens in total). The specimen distribution process started with the Printer sending the stamps to Crown Agents, who then sent to the London General Post Office (GPO). The GPO sent to the UPU authorities in Bern, Switzerland who in turn distributed the specimens to the member countries. Below are examples of the **first** UPU protected specimens.

Montserrat

Samuel Type D12 overprint
Distributed February 10, 1885



Cyprus

Samuel Type D12 overprint
Distributed January 11, 1886



Samuel Type D12 overprint
Distributed February 10, 1885

Jamaica



British Crown Colony Specimen Stamps Distribution (1886-1892)

In 1885, the 3rd UPU Congress in Lisbon decided to increase the number of stamps sent to each country from one to three. The number required for distribution was 345 stamps, sent in strips of three, with very few strips left intact today. This continued from April 1886 until June 1892.

New South Wales

Samuel Type 18 overprint
Distributed November 6, 1889



Strip of three – One known to date

Samuel Type D12 overprint
Distributed October 28, 1886

Lagos



Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed September 25, 1891

Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed May 19, 1892

Bermuda



British Crown Colony Specimen Stamps Distribution (1892-1907)

In 1891, the 4th UPU congress in Vienna decided to increase the number of stamps sent to each country from three to five. They were sent in strips of five, with very few strips remaining intact today. Five stamps were sent to each nation from July 1892 to September 1907. During this time, between 716 and 756 specimens were distributed globally.

SG61s (x5) Samuel Type D12x overprint
Distributed in 1895 - 730 specimens required for distribution

Malaysian States – Selangor



Strip of five – One known to date

Samuel Type D12 Overprint - 730 specimens required for distribution

1/2d distributed April 25, 1894

1d and 5£ distributed July 10, 1894

2 1/2d, 3d, 6d, 1/-, 4/- and £1 distributed December 18, 1894

2/6d distributed February 3, 1896

Zululand



British Crown Colony Specimen Stamps Distribution (1907-1948)

In 1906, the 6th UPU congress in Rome decided to decrease the number of stamps sent to each country from five to three. The effective date was October 1, 1907, and it remained at three stamps per nation for the Commonwealth until specimens ceased to be printed in 1948.

Samuel Type D12 overprint

Distributed in 1911 - 400 specimens required for distribution

British Honduras



Strip of three – One known to date

Samuel Type B9 perforation

Issued January to April 1933 - 415 specimens required for distribution



Falkland Islands



De La Rue Printer Overprint and Stamped Specimen Types

De La Rue and Co. was a printer for UPU specimens from their inception. From 1884 to 1928, De La Rue Overprinted or Handstamped Specimen Stamps for UPU British Colony members. The following table lists the Samuel Specimen Type, overprinted (Optd), Handstamped (H/S), or Rubber Handstamped (RH/S), measurement (Width x Height) in millimeters, protected distribution years, & frame page number. The specimen types are approximately 100% larger than the actual measurement, for ease of viewing, with the individual type also enlarged on each page. There are eleven varieties of the De La Rue Overprint and Stamped Specimens. The following are specimen examples from each of the varieties.

SPECIMEN	D9	Optd	15 × 2	1884 - 1920	1.6
SPECIMEN	D11	H/S	14.5 × 2.5	1884	1.7
SPECIMEN	D12	Optd	14.5 × 2.5	1884 - 1922	1.8
	D12x	Optd	14.5(±0.5) × 2.5	1889 - 1922	1.9
SPECIMEN	D12a	Optd	13.5 × 2.5	1897 - 1922	1.9
SPECIMEN	D13	Optd	14 × 2.5	1885 - 1887	1.10
SPECIMEN	D14	Optd	15 × 2.5	1903 - 1927	1.11
SPECIMEN	D16	Optd	15.5 × 1.75	1922 - 1928	1.12
	D16x	Optd	15.5(±0.5) × 1.75	1922 - 1928	1.12
SPECIMEN	D17	Optd	13.75 × 3.25	1922	1.13
SPECIMEN	D18	RH/S	16.5 × 2.75	1922	1.13

De La Rue D9 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The D9 overprint was used from 1919 to 1920 and measures 15 x 2 mm. Only two British Crown Colony stamps with normal use have the D9 overprint. They are the 1919 Jamaica 1½d and the 1920 Tonga Queen Salote 2d.

Distributed July 1919

381 specimens required for distribution

Jamaica



Distributed 1920

382 specimens required for distribution

Tonga



De La Rue D11 Handstamped

SPECIMEN

The first British Colony stamps to be handstamped Specimen by De La Rue prior to distribution was the 1884 Sierra Leone 1/2d, 1d, 2d and 4d set, distributed on June 19, 1884. They were perforated 14, with a very small number perforated on a 12-gauge single-line perforating machine.

Samuel explains that De La Rue, after having dispatched a supply of stamps to Sierra Leone in May 1884, were left with an inefficient stock to supply the required number of specimens, and had to complete the 100 required specimens with 40 stamps from an imperforate sheet on the 12-gauge machine.

The D11 overprint measures 14.5 x 2.5 mm. The 1/2d & 1d are Perf 14, and the 2d & 4d are Perf 12.

Sierra Leone



One of six examples of perforated 12 known to date

De La Rue D12 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The D12 overprint was the most used type, with the longest duration, and was utilized on stamps from June 1884 until it was replaced with a smaller type in 1922. The dimensions of the D12 overprint are 14.5 x 2.5 mm. It was the overprint used on the standard small size stamps (22 mm wide x 24.5 mm high).

Issued January 1912 to January 19, 2016

372 specimens required for distribution

Fiji



Distributed January 11, 1886

100 specimens required for distribution

Gibraltar



5/-, 10/-, 20/- distributed January 10, 1889

20/- dull mauve and black issued April 1894

730 specimens required for distribution

Gold Coast



Issued November 9, 1912

400 specimens required for distribution

Hong Kong



De La Rue D12a Overprint

The D12a overprint was used from 1897-1922. The D12a format is the same as D12, but the spacing width is 13.5 mm, one mm less than D12. The overprint was used on high values, called the "Revenue Size" stamps. Examples are the Malaysia Straits Settlements \$25 and \$100, issued in 1912.

Distributed in 1912

400 specimens required for distribution

SPECIMEN

Malaysia Straits



De La Rue D12x Overprint

The D12x overprint was used from 1889 - 1922. Stamps were printed slightly different than the D12 format. The width could vary from 14 - 15 mm, as opposed to the D12 14.5 mm. De La Rue re-spaced the D12 type metal as required for certain sets, to apply the overprint uniformly on each sheet. An example is the British Guiana Queen Victoria Jubilee, issued July 18, 1898.

The 1c, 5c and 15c are D12x, with the "N" in SPECIMEN sloping to the right. The 2c and 10c are D12a (13.5 x 2.5 mm) and have the "N" in SPECIMEN upright.

Distributed July 1898

730 specimens required for distribution

SPECIMEN

British Guiana



De La Rue D13 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The D13 overprint was used from 1885 - 1887. The D13 format is the same as D12, but with a width of 14 mm, 0.5 mm less than D12. The nine stamps that have the D13 overprint are the 1885 Ceylon set of seven, the Ceylon 1887 1R12c and the Malta 1886 5/- stamp. Eight are shown here.

Ceylon



*Distributed in March 1885
100 specimens required for distribution*



Malta

*Distributed in January 1886
100 specimens required for distribution*



De La Rue D14 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The D14 overprint was used from 1903 - 1927. The D14 format is the same as D12, but the spacing width is 15 mm, 0.5 mm more than D12. Fourteen stamps have the D14 overprint. They are the twelve high values of the four definitive sets from Gibraltar from 1903 to 1937, and the two high values from the Trinidad 1914 definitive set.

Gibraltar 2/-, 4/-, 8/-, £1 issued May 1, 1903 - 721 specimens required for distribution

Gibraltar 2/-, 4/-, 8/- issued between April 1910 and 1911 - 400 specimens required for distribution

Gibraltar 2/-, 4/-, 8/-, £1 issued July 17, 1912 - 400 Specimens required for distribution

Gibraltar £1 issued November 16, 1927 - 416 specimens required for distribution

Trinidad and Tobago issued in 1914 - 386 specimens required for distribution



May 1, 1903



May 1, 1903



May 1, 1903



May 1, 1903



April 1910 - 1911



April 1910 - 1911



April 1910 - 1911



July 17, 1912



July 17, 1912



July 17, 1912



July 17, 1912



November 16, 1927



1914



1914

De La Rue D16 Overprint

The D16 overprint replaced D12, D12x, and D12a in 1922, and was widely used across the colonies. The D16 overprint specimen is longer at 15.5mm, and shorter at 1.75 mm.

2/6d issued April 1927

413 specimens required for distribution

10/- issued December 1924

414 specimens required for distribution

Issued October 1, 1925

412 specimens required for distribution

SPECIMEN

Bermuda



Kenya and Uganda



De La Rue D16x Overprint

The D16x overprint was used from 1922 - 1928. Stamps were printed slightly different than the D16 overprint. The length varied from 15 - 16 mm, as opposed to the D16 15.5 mm. Examples of these are the five Gibraltar high values.

2/- issued June 20, 1924

409 specimens required for distribution

2/6d, 5/-, 10/-, £5 issued October 15, 1925

413 specimens required for distribution

SPECIMEN

Gibraltar

June 20, 1924

October 15, 1925



October 15, 1925

October 15, 1925

October 15, 1925



De La Rue D17 Overprint

The D17 overprint was only used on two stamps both issued in 1922, measuring 13.75 x 3.25 mm

*Issued December 5, 1922
413 specimens required for distribution*

SPECIMEN

Jamaica



Malta



*Issued August 28, 1922
410 specimens required for distribution*

De La Rue D18 Rubber Handstamp

There was only one UPU distributed stamp with the D18 type. It was the rubber handstamp on the 1922 Gambia 5/- stamp. This stamp was part of a series of four. The 4d and 7 1/2d were overprinted with type D12, and the 1/- was overprinted with type D12a. De La Rue neglected to overprint the required number of specimens of this stamp in the normal way, and when the omission was discovered, they used this handstamp to obtain the required supply.

*Issued in Sep 1, 1922
404 specimens required for distribution*

SPECIMEN

Gambia



De La Rue Printer Perforation Specimen Types

From 1928 - 1948, De La Rue perforated Specimen Stamps for UPU British Colony members. The following table lists the Samuel Specimen Perforation Type, number of perforated holes, Protected Distribution Years, and Frame page number for reference. The specimen types are approximately 100% larger than the actual measurement, for ease of viewing, with the individual type also enlarged on each page.



D19	Perf	65 Holes	1928 - 1936	1.14
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D20	Perf	65 Holes	1936 - 1940	1.15
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D21	Perf	65 Holes	1941 - 1948	1.16
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De La Rue D19 Perforation



In September 1928, in alignment with other security printers, De La Rue and Company changed their process from overprinting to perforating the word "SPECIMEN". The perforations were applied sideways on stamps until 1931, after which it was applied horizontally. The D19 perforation type continued until 1936.

Examples of the D19 perforation applied sideways:

*4d issued September 1930
422 specimens required for distribution*

*£1 issued September 1928
421 specimens required for distribution*



St. Vincent



Examples of the D19 perforation applied horizontally

*Issued July 2, 1934
413 specimens required for distribution*



K.U.T.



De La Rue D20 Perforation



The D20 perforation specimen is a narrower version of the D19 punch. It was widely used from 1936 to 1940. Examples of the D20 perforation specimen are shown below.

Ascension

*Issued May 12, 1938
399 specimens required for distribution*



Bermuda

*Issued January 2, 1938
400 specimens required for distribution*



Leeward Islands

*Issued November 25, 1938
395 specimens required for distribution*



Malaysia Straits Settlements

*Issued January 26, 1938
405 specimens required for distribution*



De La Rue D21 Perforation



The D21 Perforation is very similar to the D20 perforation, but with smaller holes. It replaced the D20 punch and was used from 1941 - 1948, after the De La Rue Bunhill Row works in London was bombed at the end of 1940. In early 1941, a new perforator was put into service. All De La Rue UPU specimens from 1941 onwards had the D21 perforation.

Issued October 12, 1942

351 specimens required for distribution

Bahamas



Issued October 19, 1945

357 specimens required for distribution

Malaya (British Military Administration)



Falkland Islands Dependencies

Issued July 12, 1946

354 specimens required for distribution



Issued April 8, 1946

357 specimens required for distribution

Hong Kong



Bradbury Wilkinson Printer Specimen Types

Bradbury, Wilkinson, and Co. was a printer for UPU specimens from 1891 to 1948. The majority of the specimens were overprinted. The following table lists the Samuel Specimen Type, if they were overprinted (Optd) or Perforated (Perf), the measurement (Width x Height) in millimeters, the number of perforated holes, the Protected Distribution Years, and the Frame page number for reference. After 1928, all examples were perforated.

SPECIMEN	B1	Perf	80 Holes	1890 - 1920	2.2
SPECIMEN.	B2	Optd	12 × 2.5	1891 - 1898	2.3
SPECIMEN.	B3	Optd	12.5 × 1.25	1921 - 1927	2.3
SPECIMEN	B4	Optd	15.75 × 1.5	1922	2.1
SPECIMEN.	B5	Optd	29 × 3.75	1922	2.4
SPECIMEN.	B6	Optd	12.25 × 2.5	1923 - 1925	2.5
SPECIMEN	B7	Optd	16 × 1.5	1927	2.4
SPECIMEN.	B8	Optd	16 × 1.75/1.5	1928	2.6
	B9	Perf	67 Holes	1928 - 1948	2.7

Bradbury Wilkinson B4 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The only specimen distributed by the UPU with the B4 overprint was the 1922 1a on 20pa Iraq British Occupation overprint on Turkish issue Official stamp

*Distributed December 14, 1922
410 specimens required for distribution*

Iraq



The only stamps distributed by the UPU with the B1 perforation were the 1913 -1914 Turkish issues, including the two sets shown, and the 1918 issue of Turkey with the Iraq overprint. Even though Turkey at the time was part of the Ottoman Empire and not a British Colony, it illustrates the B1 perforation.

*Distributed October 25, 1913
389 specimens required for distribution*

Turkey



*Distributed February 5, 1914
392 specimens required for distribution*

Turkey



Bradbury Wilkinson B2 Overprint

SPECIMEN.

Seven stamps have the B2 overprint. They are the 1891 - 1898 Falkland Islands set. The overprint measures 12 x 2.5 mm and has a period after the "N".

*1/2d distributed June 9, 1891 - 345 specimens required for distribution.
 2d distributed November 1895 - 730 specimens required for distribution
 2 1/2d distributed June 9, 1891 - 345 specimens required for distribution
 6d distributed December 2, 1891 - 345 specimens required for distribution
 9d distributed November 1895 - 730 specimens required for distribution
 2/6d and 5/- issued Octobers 5, 1898. - 730 specimens required for distribution*

Falkland Islands



Bradbury Wilkinson B3 Overprint

SPECIMEN.

The B3 overprint was only utilized in 1921 and 1927, in Iraq, after the League of Nations issued a Mandate, effective April 25, 1920, that the United Kingdom would administer Iraq. The B3 overprint was 12.5 x 1.25 mm, with a period after the "N". Eight stamps have this overprint, including four 1921 official stamps.

*Issued April 1, 1927
 413 specimens required for distribution*

Iraq



Bradbury Wilkinson B5 Overprint

SPECIMEN.^{2.4}

This overprint was the largest of any UPU Colonies British printer's standard type. It measures 29 x 3.75 mm and has a period after the "N". Six stamps have the B5 overprint. They are from the British Mandated Territory of Tanganyika 1922 Giraffe definitive set top values.

Issued 1922

398 specimens required for distribution

Tanganyika



Bradbury Wilkinson B7 Overprint

SPECIMEN

Only one stamp was distributed with the B7 overprint. It was the Barbados 1d 1927 Tercentenary of Settlement. The overprint measures 16 x 1.5 mm.

Issued February 17, 1927

415 specimens required for distribution

Barbados



Bradbury Wilkinson B6 Overprint

SPECIMEN.

The B6 overprint is a larger version of the B2 overprint, measuring 12.25 x 2.5 mm and has a period after the "N". Seventeen stamps have the B6 overprint. They were in use from 1923 to 1925, and are the Jamaica 1923 Child Welfare League set, the Malta 1925 Postage Due set and the Tanganyika 1925 set of 4 Giraffes set.

Issued November 1, 1923 - 412 specimens required for distribution

Jamaica



Issued July 20, 1925 - 412 specimens required for distribution

Malta



Issued 1925 - 412 specimens required for distribution

Tanganyika



Bradbury Wilkinson B8 Overprint

SPECIMEN.

The Cyprus 1928 set of ten is the only set of stamps which has the B8 overprint. The overprint measures 16 x 1.5-1.75 mm and has a period after the "N".

Issued February 1, 1928

416 Specimens required for distribution

Cyprus



Bradbury Wilkinson B9 Perforation

The B9 Perforation was widely used on British Colonial Stamps between 1928 and 1948. It is the only Bradbury, Wilkinson perforation used on UPU specimens.



Issued January 3, 1938

405 Specimens required for distribution

Falkland Islands



Issued February 26, 1941

405 Specimens required for distribution

Hong Kong



Issued March 1, 1932

422 Specimens required for distribution

Sierra Leone



Trinidad and Tobago




Issued January 1940

362 Specimens required for distribution



Waterlow Printer Specimen Types

Waterlow & Sons was a printer for UPU specimens from 1898 to 1948. All Waterlow specimens prior to 1928 were overprinted. After 1928, all examples were perforated. The following table lists the Samuel Specimen Type, if they were overprinted (Optd) or Perforated (Perf), the measurement (Width x Height) in millimeters, the number of perforated holes, the Protected Distribution Years, and the Frame page number for reference.

SPECIMEN	W1	Optd	19.5 × 1.75	1898	2.8
SPECIMEN	W2	Optd	12 × 1.25	1913 - 1926	2.9
SPECIMEN	W3	Optd	17 × 2	1918	2.10
SPECIMEN	W4	Optd	19.75 × 2.5	1922 - 1931	2.11
SPECIMEN	W5	Optd	15 × 2	1925	2.12
SPECIMEN	W6	Optd	15.25 × 1.75	1926	2.12
SPECIMEN	W7	Optd	12.5 × 2	1928	2.13
	W8	Perf	70 Holes	1928 - 1944	2.14-15
	W8a	Perf	69 Holes	1938 & 1942	2.14-15
	W9	Perf	70 Holes	1944 - 1948	2.16

Waterlow W1 Overprint

SPECIMEN

Only 3 stamps have the W1 overprint. They are the 1898 Niger Cost Protectorate set. The overprint measures 19.5 x 1.75 mm. Below are examples of the three stamps in pairs.

*Distributed June 28, 1898
730 Specimens required for distribution*



Strip of two – One known to date

Waterlow W2 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The W2 overprint was used on five sets, totaling forty-six stamps. They were used on eighteen of nineteen of the Rhodesia 1913 Admiral set, issued except for 1½d Admiral, which is the only known W3 overprint. The W2 overprint measures 12 x 1.25 mm. The W3 overprint measures 17 x 2 mm. The other the issues with the W2 overprint are the Federated Malay States 1924 Postage Due set of six stamps shown below, the 1925 Transjordan set of fifteen, and the Malta 1926 low value definitive set of seven stamps.

*Issued December 1924 to 1926
414 specimens required for distribution*

Federated Malay States



Waterlow W3 Overprint

SPECIMEN

2.9-2.10

Distributed on October 6, 1913 - 400 Specimens required for distribution

1 1/2d Distributed on Dec 6, 1918 - 375 Specimens required for distribution



Waterlow W4 Overprint

SPECIMEN

The W4 overprint was used from 1922 to 1931. Eighteen total stamps have the W4 overprint. Eleven of the stamps are from North Borneo, with nine shown below, and seven were the 1928 high value definitive set from Malta. The overprint measures 19.75 x 2.5 mm.

North Borneo

3 cent on 4 cent distributed on April 28, 1924
421 specimens required for distribution



3c to \$5 distributed on December 30, 1930
422 specimens required for distribution



Waterlow W5 Overprint**SPECIMEN**

The only example of specimens with the W5 overprint is the 1925 Northern Rhodesia Definitive set. Sixteen of the seventeen stamps have the W5 overprint, except for the 3/- violet and blue, which was issued in 1929 and has the W8 overprint. The overprint measures 15 x 2 mm.

Issued April 1, 1925

419 specimens required for distribution

Northern Rhodesia

**Waterlow W6 Overprint****SPECIMEN**

The 1926 Malta Definitive set high values are the only stamps distributed with the W6 overprint. The overprint measures 15.25 x 1.75 mm.

Issued April 6, 1926 to September 2, 1927

412 specimens required for distribution

Malta



Waterlow W7 Overprint

SPECIMEN

This W7 specimen was only used in 1928, in two countries and on two sets, on sixteen stamps. Twelve are the low values from the Malta 1928 Definitive set. The other four are from the Kenya and Uganda 1928 Postage Due set. Four of the six stamps have the W7 Type. The 30c brown and the 1/- grey-green were issued in 1931 and 1933 respectively and have the W8 perforation. The type measures 12.5 x 2 mm.

Issued October 1 to December 5, 1928

423 specimens required for distribution

Malta



Issued September 1928 - 421 specimens required for distribution

Kenya and Uganda



Waterlow W8 Perforation



This specimen type was the first Waterlow Perforation, and was widely used for UPU specimens, from 1928 to 1944. It was usually applied diagonally sloping upwards. The following 1932 Antigua Definitive examples illustrate the W8 perforation.

Issued Jan 27, 1932

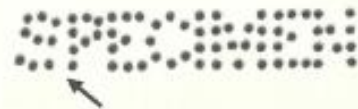
422 specimens required for distribution

Antigua



Waterlow W8a Perforation

Missing a perforation on the S, in the word SPECIMEN.



The pins of the Waterlow "SPECIMEN" perforator type W8 started to wear out in 1937. Specimen stamps produced between August 1937 and October 27, 1937, have a mixture of types W8 and W8a, which was the first indicator that the Waterlow perforator was starting to fail. From November 4, 1937, until May 1938, all specimen stamps show type W8a. Below are the Basutoland definitive high values, with every stamp perforated with the W8a type.

Issued April 1, 1938

400 Specimens required for distribution

Basutoland



Waterlow W8a/W8 perforations the first time in the same set

On May 2, 1938, the George VI Sierra Leone definitive specimen set of sixteen were perforated, with eight values showing type W8a and eight showing type W8, indicating that the perforator pins must have been repaired that day. After this date, with all pins fixed, all specimen stamps reverted to type W8 until mid-1941. After mid-1941, under war conditions, it was difficult to get non-essential equipment repaired or replaced. The result was that many sets had both W8 and W8a perforations. Below are six examples missing the "S" punch, and six having the complete "S".

1/2d, 1d, 1 1/2d, 2d, 3d, 5d shown
399 Specimens required for distribution

Sierra Leone missing the "S" punch



4d, 1/-, 1/3d, 2/-, 10/-, 1£ shown
399 Specimens required for distribution

Sierra Leone with complete "SPECIMEN" punch



This W9 perforation replaced the W8/8a perforation in 1944 and was used until 1948. The subtle differences between W8 and W9 is that W9 has a larger "P", and a different "M" pattern.

British Guiana

\$2 issued June 11, 1945
\$3 issued July 2, 1945
357 specimens required for distribution



Issued October 15, 1947
374 specimens required for distribution

Dominica



Issued December 22, 1947
380 specimens required for distribution

North Borneo



St. Lucia

Issued February 4, 1946
357 specimens required for distribution



Harrison Printer Specimen Types

Harrison & Sons was a printer for UPU specimens from 1927 to 1947. In 1927 and early 1928 the stamps were handstamped. From late 1928 until 1948, all stamps were perforated. The following table lists the Samuel Specimen Type, if they were handstamped (H/S) or Perforated (Perf), the measurement (Width x Height) in millimeters, the number of perforated holes, the Protected Distribution Years, and the Frame page number for reference.

SPECIMEN	H1	H/S	15 × 1.75	1927	3.1
SPECIMEN.	H2	H/S	14 × 1.5	1928	3.2
⊗SPECIMEN⊗	H3	Perf	58 Holes	1928 - 1947	3.3

Harrison H1 Handstamp

SPECIMEN

The 1927 Palestine definitive set of fourteen are the only stamps issued with the H1 handstamp. The dimensions are 15 x 1.75 mm.

3m and 13m distributed July 5, 1927 -

Remainder of the series distributed August 29, 1927

419 specimens required for distribution

Palestine



The 1928 Gold Coast Christianborg Castle set of ten are the only stamps distributed with the H2 handstamp. The dimensions are 14 x 1.5 mm, with a period after the "N".

Issued August 1, 1928

419 specimens required for distribution

Gold Coast





The H3 perforation was used from 1928 - 1947. Thirty-nine stamps were perforated with the H3 type. In addition to the three sets shown below, they include the 1932 - 1942 Palestine set of eight, the 1938-1941 Seychelles set of twenty-four and the 1928 Kelantan \$1.

Issued August 1, 1938 - 398 specimens required for distribution

Issued December 1, 1947 - 377 specimens required for distribution

British Virgin Islands



Issued April 15, 1940 - 362 specimens required for distribution

Issued July 12, 1937 - 406 specimens required for distribution

Dominica



Grenada



Perkins Bacon Printer Specimen Types

Perkins, Bacon & Co was a printer for UPU specimens from 1927 to 1934. Three sets from Transjordan and the Falkland Islands 1929 - 1932 definitive set were the only specimens distributed.

SPECIMEN	P4	Optd	14.25 × 2.25	1927	3.4
	P5	Perf	67 Holes	1929 - 1934	3.5

Perkins Bacon P4 Overprint

SPECIMEN

Thirteen stamps were issued with the P4 overprint. They are the 1927 Transjordan definitive set shown below.

Issued November 1, 1927, to May 1929 - 416 specimens required for distribution





There are thirty-five stamps with the P5 type perforation. Twenty-four are from Transjordan distributed from 1929 to 1934. The other eleven are the Falkland Islands 1929-1932 whales and penguins set shown below.

4d issued February 18, 1932 - 422 specimens required for distribution

Remainder of the set issued September 2, 1929 - 423 specimens required for distribution

Falkland Islands

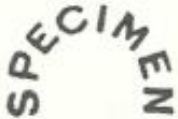


Inland Revenue Specimen stamps

Seven different stamp entities had protected specimen examples on stamps from Great Britain, overprinted by the Inland Revenue:

- Niger Coast Protectorate 1892 (GB9)
- Bechuanaland Protectorate 1902 - 1915 (GB15, GB17, GB23)
- British Levant 1902 - 1921 (GB17, GB23, GB26)
- British Occupation of Italian Colonies 1943 - 1947 (GB23, GB26)
- British Post Offices in China 1919 - 1927 (GB23, GB26)
- Morocco Agencies (British, French and Spanish) 1907 - 1937 (GB17, GB23, GB26, GB32)
- Nauru 1915 - 1916 (GB23)

After 1900, only stamps with a face value of one shilling or more were protected with the "SPECIMEN" overprint, except for the Bechuanaland half pence and one pence shown below.

SPECIMEN	GB9	H/S	14.75×1.75	1892	3.6
SPECIMEN	GB15	Optd	14.5×2.25	1901	3.6
	GB17	Optd	16×2.75	1902 - 1909	3.6
SPECIMEN	GB23	Optd	10×1.5	1915 - 1943	3.7
SPECIMEN	GB26	Optd	12.5×2	1917 - 1947	3.7
SPECIMEN	GB32	Optd	10.5×2	1932 - 1937	3.7

GB9 Overprint

Six stamps have this overprint

Distributed July 20, 1892 - 730 specimens required for distribution

Niger Coast Protectorate



GB15 Overprint

One stamp has this overprint

Distributed April 22, 1901 - 716 specimens required for distribution

Bechuanaland Protectorate



GB17 Overprint

Seven stamps have this overprint

Distributed August 24, 1904 - 721 specimens required for distribution

Bechuanaland Protectorate



Inland Revenue GB23 Overprint**SPECIMEN****Inland Revenue GB26 Overprint****SPECIMEN**

The GB23 overprint measures 10 x 1.5 mm. Twenty stamps have this overprint.

The GB26 overprint measures 12.5 x 2 mm. Eight stamps have this overprint. Below is the only issuance that uses both.

*1/-, 2/6d (GB23) issued 1943. No record of actual distribution date
351 - 354 specimens required for distribution*

*5/-, 10/- (GB26) distributed March 31, 1947
363 specimens required for distribution*

British Occupation of Italian Colonies**Inland Revenue GB32 Overprint****SPECIMEN**

The G32 overprint was only used on the high value Morocco Agency specimens between 1932 and 1937, with six stamps having this overprint. The GB32 overprint measures 10.5 x 2 mm.

*Distributed November 8, 1932
418 specimens required for distribution*

**Morocco Agencies
French Currency**

Local Overprints, Handstamps and Rubber Handstamps

Twenty-nine different stamp entities produced protected specimen stamps locally, using local overprints, metal handstamps and rubber handstamps. Of the more than 6000 total specimen stamps, approximately 400 were produced locally. The distribution years were between 1884 (Trinidad) to 1932 (Papua). Labuan, North Borneo, Rhodesia, South Africa and the Australian states made up 85% of the locally produced specimens.

Local Overprints, Hand Stamps & Rubber HSs	Specimen Type	# Stamps	Year(s)
British East Africa Company	BEA1 Rubber Handstamp	4	1894 - 1895
British Bechuanaland and Bechuanaland Protectorate	BEC2 Handstamp	30	1888 - 1892
Canada	[1] Rubber Handstamp	6	1897
Canada	[2] Rubber Handstamp	1	1897 - 1906
Ceylon	CE4 Overprint	2	1891
Ceylon	CE7 Overprint	2	1927
Dominica	DO1 Handstamp	1	1918
East Africa and Uganda	K2 Rubber Handstamp	1	1919
Fiji	FJ1 Handstamp	2	1916
Grenada	GR3 Overprint	1	1892
Grenada	GR5 Handstamp	1	1916
Hong Kong	HK4 Handstamp	2	1898
India	[15] Rubber Handstamp	2	1888 - 1890
Kenya	K4 Rubber Handstamp	8	1921
Labuan	LA2 Handstamp	7	1894
Malta	MAL1 Overprint	1	1902
Mauritius	MAU2 Overprint	3	1926
Papua	PAP1 Overprint	2	1932
Natal and Zululand	NA1 Rubber Handstamp	16	1890 - 1895
New South Wales	[15] Overprint	2	1892
New South Wales	[16] Overprint	4	1892
New South Wales	[16a] Overprint	7	1892
New South Wales	[18] Overprint	1	1889
North Borneo	NB2 Overprint	15	1894

Local Overprints, Handstamps and Rubber Handstamps

Local Overprints, Hand Stamps & Rubber HSs	Specimen Type	# Stamps	Year(s)
North Borneo	NB3 Overprint	10	1895
North Borneo	NB4 Overprint	49	1895 - 1902
North Borneo	NB5 Overprint	29	1899
North Borneo	NB6 Overprint	12	1909
North Borneo	NB7 Overprint	7	1911
North Borneo	NB8 Overprint	1	1916
North Borneo	NB9 Overprint	2	1916
North Borneo	NB10 Overprint	14	1992
Rhodesia	R5 Perforation	29	1902 - 1908
Rhodesia	R6 Overprint	5	1905
Rhodesia	R7 Overprint	18	1910
St. Vincent	SV5 Overprint	1	1892
St. Vincent	SV10 Overprint	1	1897
Seychelles	SY2 Overprint	2	1896
Seychelles	SY3 Handstamp	3	1901
Seychelles	SY4 Handstamp	4	1901 - 1904
Seychelles	SY5 Overprint	5	1902
South Africa	SA1 Rubber Handstamp	1	1910
South Africa	SA3 Overprint	11	1913
South Africa	SA4 Rubber Handstamp	3	1916,1921
South Africa	SA5 Handstamp	24	1927
South Australia	[2] Rubber Handstamp	16	1886 - 1890
South Australia	[4] Rubber Handstamp	1	1896
South West Africa	SWA1 Overprint	12	1923
Sudan	SU1 Overprint	5	1905
Tanganyika Nyasaland- Rhodesia Force	NY4 Overprint	5	1917
Tasmania	TAS[2] Overprint	10	1892
Tasmania	TAS[3] Overprint	8	1900
Tasmania	TAS[4] Overprint	14	1904 - 1905
Trinidad	TRI1 Overprint	6	1884

Sudan SU1 Overprint

SPECIMEN

Five stamps have the SU1 overprint, measuring 17.75 x 2.5 mm.

Distributed December 26, 1905 - 726 specimens required for distribution



Trinidad TRI1 Overprint

SPECIMEN

Only 100 sets were distributed. Some postal authorities received complete sets with the D12 overprint. The Royal Swedish General Post Office UPU collection have the 2 1/2d and the 4d overprinted with the D12 Type and the other four with the TRI1 locally applied overprint. The set below all have the TRI1 overprint except for the 6d value (D12). The TRI1 overprint measures 11.5 x 2 mm.

Distributed August 30, 1884

100 specimens required for distribution



One of five examples known to date

Mauritius MAU2 Overprint

Specimen

4.1

Three stamps have the MAU2 overprint, measuring 19.75 x 2.75/2.25 mm.

Distributed January 6, 1926

413 specimens required for distribution

Mauritius



Papua PAP1 Overprint

SPECIMEN

Two Papua stamps had protected specimens distributed by the UPU. They were the 9d and the 1/3, printed in 1932. The PAP1 Overprint measures 15.5 x 1.75 mm. It was applied by J. Ash in Melbourne, Australia, the printer of the stamps.

Distributed August 1, 1932

418 specimens required for distribution

Papua



St. Vincent SV5 and SV10 Overprint

Specimen SPECIMEN

One stamp has the SV5 overprint measuring 16.25 x 2.5mm (5d on 4d), and one stamp has the SV10 overprint measuring 17.5 x 2.5mm (3d on 1d)

Five pence on 4d chocolate distributed November 23, 1892 - 730 specimens required for distribution

Three pence on 1d mauve distributed July 30, 1897 - 730 specimens required for distribution



Canada [1] Rubber Handstamp**Canada [2] Rubber Handstamp****SPECIMEN****SPECIMEN**

Eight Canadian stamps had protected specimens distributed by the UPU. Seven of them are the top 1897 Diamond Jubilee values. The twenty-cent has the Canada [2] rubber handstamp which measures 13.5 x 2 mm. The other six have the Canada [1] rubber handstamp which measures 15.5 x 2.5 mm. Presumably because of their high face value, it was decided to protect the top values with a local handstamp before sending to the UPU for distribution.

Distributed October 5, 1897 - 730 specimens required for distribution

**Ceylon CE4 Overprint****SPECIMEN**

Only two stamps have the CE4 overprint, measuring 20.5 x 2.5 mm.

Ceylon

*Distributed December 15, 1891
716 specimens required for distribution*

**Ceylon CE7 Overprint****SPECIMEN**

Only two stamps have the CE7 overprint, measuring 16.5 x 1.75 mm.

Ceylon

*Distributed January 24, 1927
415 specimens required for distribution*



Earliest Specimen Stamps by Crown Colony 1884 - 1886

British Commonwealth UPU Specimens were produced and distributed starting in 1884 with Sierra Leone (Frame 1.7). In 1944, the Falkland Island Dependencies were the last colony to start specimen distribution. The earliest specimens produced from each stamp issuing entity are highlighted in chronological order.

1884 Ceylon D12 Overprint



*Distributed July 26, 1884
100 Specimens required for distribution*

1884 Malaysia Straits Settlements D12 Overprint



*Distributed July 26, 1884
100 Specimens required for distribution*

1884 - 1886 British Honduras D12 Overprint



*1d distributed October 2, 1884
100 Specimens required for distribution*

*1/- distributed October 28, 1886
356 Specimens required for distribution*

1884 - 1886 Barbados D12 Overprint

*3d, 4d distributed November 1, 1884
100 Specimens required for distribution*

*6d, 1/-, 5/- distributed September 9, 1886
345 Specimens required for distribution*



Earliest Specimen Stamps by Crown Colony 1935 - 1944

1935 Newfoundland B9 Perforation

Issued May 6, 1935. 409 Specimens required for distribution



1937 Aden D20 Perforation

Issued April 1, 1937. 406 Specimens required for distribution



1940 Pitcairn Islands B9 Perforation

Issued October 15, 1940. 362 Specimens required for distribution



1944 Falkland Island Dependencies B9 Perforation

Issued February 12, 1944. 354 Specimens required for distribution



The fifteen specimen stamps that were distributed by the UPU but were never issued for commercial use.

Throughout the course of the UPU distributing specimens, there were specimen examples that were either returned, were never issued, or were destroyed.

Ceylon 1884 24 cents, Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed July 26, 1884. 100 specimens were distributed by the UPU to all member countries. They were prepared for use and sent to Ceylon but were not issued.



Gold Coast 1913 10 shilling, Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed in 1913 but never issued. 389 specimens required for distribution



Jamaica 1921 6d, Samuel Type D12x overprint distributed April 20, 1921. The specimens were sent to Jamaica, but due to political reasons were not issued, and all stocks destroyed. The first two shipments were destroyed on July 2, 1921, and the third shipment in October 1921. As the stamp was so close to issuance, 398 specimens were sent to the UPU for distribution. Only one example of the Multiple Crown CA (left) and 4 examples of the Multiple Script CA (right) exist.



Malaysia Straits Settlements 1921 8d carmine, Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed August 1, 1922, but never issued. SPECIMEN examples were distributed through the UPU, with few overprinted examples known. 410 specimens required for distribution.



Malta 1918 3d with white back, Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed June 29, 1918, SPECIMEN examples were distributed through the UPU. The stamp was never issued, presumably because a large stock of King Edward VII stamps of this denomination remained on hand, even though he passed away on May 6, 1910. 381 specimens required for distribution.



Specimen stamps that were distributed by the UPU but were never issued for commercial use

Labuan and North Borneo 1899 4c on 1c, 4c on 2c, 4c on 3c, Samuel Type NB5 overprint distributed October 26, 1899. Referenced in Gibbons with the 1899 sets respectively. 730 specimens required for distribution. The stamps were never issued.



St. Helena 1911 1d red, Samuel Type D12a overprint distributed September 22, 1911. Marcus Samuel called this stamp the "all red error", printed by mistake, as a result of a misunderstanding between the local Postmaster and De La Rue in London. When the Postmaster requested a further supply of the one pence Carmine and Black, specimens were supplied to the UPU for distribution, and a shipment was sent to St. Helena. On arrival, the "all red error" was discovered, and the stock was destroyed. Specimens were distributed to UPU member countries. 400 specimens required for distribution.



Transvaal 1909 2d grey, Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed September 22, 1909, by the UPU, but the entire supply sent to Transvaal was destroyed. There is one 2d grey non-specimen stamp that exists in the Mosely Collection in the British Library. 409 specimens required for distribution.



Trinidad 1899 3d on 5d dull purple and mauve, Samuel Type D12 overprint distributed December 9, 1899. This stamp prepared for use but was never issued. It was distributed by the UPU to all member countries. 5 copies were reserved for the Trinidad Official Album. 726 specimens required for distribution.

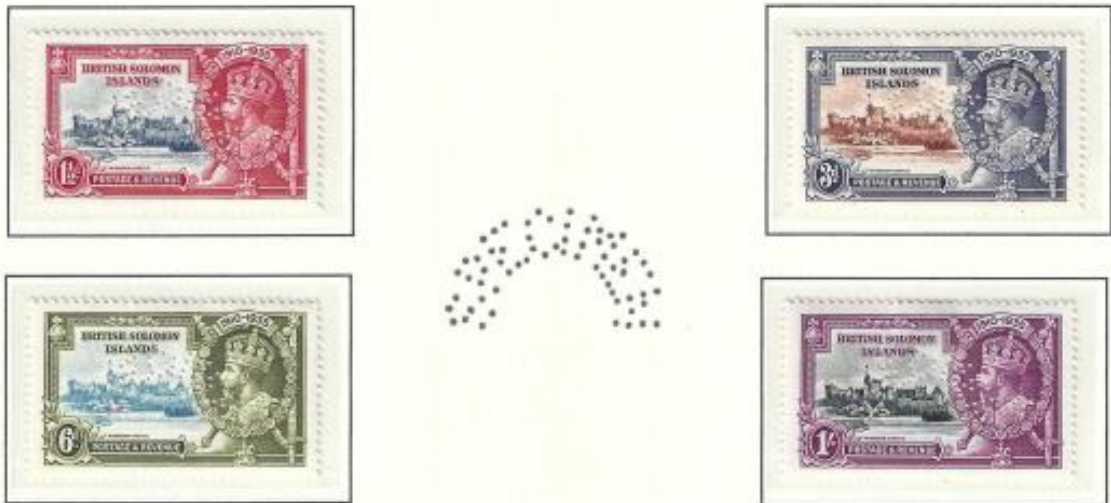


1935 Silver Jubilee Omnibus

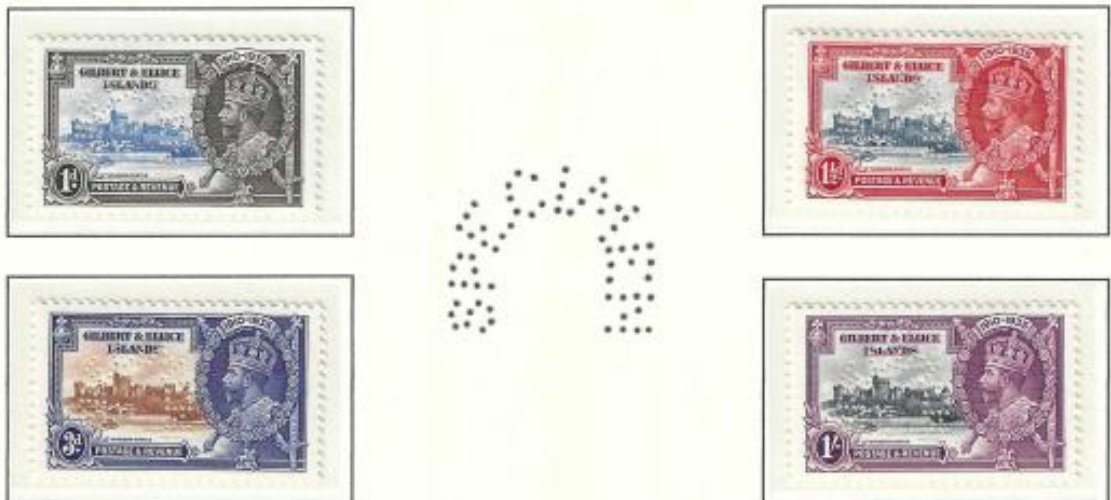
Sixty countries issued 1935 Silver Jubilee stamps commemorating the 25th Anniversary of George V as King of Great Britain, the Colonies and Dominions. Forty-four countries issued the same set of four on May 6, 1935, with a common design of George V and Windsor castle, but with different colors and denominations. 409 specimens were required for distribution by the UPU, for all forty-four sets, with the following printer breakdown:

- De La Rue & Co (D19 Perforation) - Fourteen countries
- Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co (B9 Perforation) - Fifteen countries
- Waterlow & Sons (W8 Perforation) - Fifteen countries

De La Rue Example D19 British Solomon Islands



Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co Example B9 Gilbert and Ellice Islands



1935 Silver Jubilee Omnibus

Waterlow & Sons Example W8 Nyasaland



1937 Omnibus Coronation

Fifty-nine countries issued stamps commemorating the 1937 Coronation of George VI and Queen Elizabeth, as King and Queen of Great Britain and the Colonies and Dominions. Forty-five countries issued the same set of three, on May 12, 1937, with a common design of the King and Queen together, but with different colors and denominations. 406 specimens were required for distribution by the UPU, for all forty-four sets, with the following printer breakdown:

- De La Rue & Co (D20 Perforation) - Twenty-two countries.
- Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co (B9 Perforation) - Twenty-three countries

De La Rue Example D20 British Honduras



Strip of two – One known to date

1937 Coronation Omnibus

Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co Example B9 Falkland Islands



Strip of two – One known to date

1946 Victory Omnibus

Sixty-two countries issued stamps commemorating the end of World War II. Forty-five different Victory countries distributed specimens, with forty-three countries issuing the same set of two, between August 8, 1946, and December 16, 1946. They had a common design of George VI with parliament in the background, and with different colors and denominations. The other two sets were from the Aden Protectorate States of Kathiri and Qu'aiti. De La Rue perforated all of the specimens, with 360 required for distribution by the UPU.

De La Rue & Co Example D21 Pitcairn Islands



Last British Empire protected specimens distributed by the UPU

The last UPU protected specimen stamps to be distributed were between January 4, 1948, and July 1, 1948.

Antigua Issued January 4, 1948.

Samuel Type W9 Perforation diagonal

380 specimens required for distribution

Antigua



Mauritius issued March 22, 1948

Samuel Type B9 Perforation

380 specimens required for distribution

Mauritius



Montserrat issued January 4, 1948

Samuel Type D21 Perforation diagonal

380 specimens required for distribution

Montserrat



EPILOGUE - The decision to cease using the SPECIMEN perforation was communicated to all countries in a circular letter from the Colonial Office dated July 15, 1948, mainly due to cost.

The final British Empire protected set distributed by the UPU was the Gold Coast Definitive set of twelve issued July 1, 1948. All stamps distributed by the UPU after this were uncanceled.

Samuel Type B9 Perforation
379 specimens required for distribution



Gold Coast



And Finally.....

The largest UPU British Commonwealth Specimen Collections

- British Postal Museum and Archives, London (also referred to as the National Postal Museum)
- British Library, Philatelic Collections, London (until 1973 housed in the British Museum)
- Musee de la Poste, Paris (Paris Postal Museum)
- Postmuseum, Stockholm (Stockholm Postal Museum)
- Post Museum, Berne (Swiss Postal Museum)
- International Bureau of the UPU collection in Berne

Largest Specimen Collection in private hands:

You will have to guess 😊

Thanks for attention today!