

# Falkland Islands King George VI: 1938–50 Pictorial Definitives

By Hugh Osborne FRPSL

The 1938–50 pictorial definitives of the Falkland Islands saw no less than 11 printings between 1937 and 1949 – not counting those printed for use within the Falkland Islands Dependencies. Hugh Osborne FRPSL offers some key advice on how to identify each printing using only a Stanley Gibbons Colour Key and a good magnifying glass of not less than  $\times 10$  power.



The origins of the 1938–50 definitives can be traced back to the issue prepared for King Edward VIII – the early essays of which show the head of the King who abdicated in December 1936. Design work with the head of King George VI resumed for the new set and was duly approved for issue. The production contract was awarded by the Crown Agents (CA) on behalf of the Falkland Islands Government to the English security printers Bradbury Wilkinson & Co Ltd of New Malden, Surrey. The 12 designs (½d. to £1) were recess printed, mostly in two colours, and in sheets of 60 stamps, in ten rows of six, and despatched by sea via Montevideo to Stanley. A smaller consignment of all values was retained by the CA in London for sale to the international philatelic market from 3 January 1938 for a limited period. The colonial shipment arrived at the Stanley Treasury on 30 December 1937 and placed on sale locally at the post office in Stanley, East Falkland. Onward transport by sea and poor weather delayed the release of the stamps at Fox Bay post office on West Falkland until 15 January 1938 and at Grytviken post office on South Georgia until 30 March 1938.

After the initial 1937 printing there were a further 14 printings, four of which fall outside the scope of the article since they were overprinted for sale within the Falkland Islands Dependencies. Table 1 shows the dates of the 11 printings – two each in 1944, 1947 and 1949 – and constituent duties/values.

The current SG ‘Part 1’ listing does not include all the printings of all values. Where possible, therefore, colour statements will refer to the SG ‘Part 1’ listing. Full listings are available, in more specialised Falkland Islands catalogues.

## 1937 printing: despatched 26 November 1937

The first printing (*Fig 1*) comprised 12 values, as shown in Table 1, and was produced on the best, high quality, pre-war paper, which is thick and slightly creamy in colour with generally clean perforations. The gum is the key indication of this printing. It is thick with a tendency to be creamy in appearance and its application on the back of the stamp does not appear

Table 1: The 11 Printings of the 1938–50 Pictorial Definitives

Value	Printings							
	1937	1938	1941	1942	1944	1946	1947	1949
½d.	✓			✓	✓		✓	
1d.	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
2d.	✓	✓						
2½d.	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
3d.			✓	✓	✓			
4d.	✓	✓			✓			
6d.	✓	✓			✓			
6d.								✓
9d.	✓	✓			✓		✓	
1s.	✓	✓			✓		✓	
1s.3d.						✓		
2s.6d.	✓	✓			✓			✓
5s.	✓	✓			✓			✓
10s.	✓	✓			✓			✓
£1	✓	✓			✓			✓
Qty	12	9	3	4	12	1	4	7



Fig 1  
Examples of the 1937 printing with wide margins and three digit sheet numbers

all-over even, but randomly crazed (*Fig 2*). (Gum can frequently be best studied in strong light by holding the stamp up high, bouncing the light off the gum side from the source, sun or bulb, into one's eye.)

Benchmark stamps for the gum and paper of the first printing are the 1d. Swan and the 2½d. Sheep, as neither were reprinted. The side margins are usually wide (see *Fig 1*). Unmounted mint is more difficult to find.

### 1938 printing: despatched 11 July 1938

The second printing comprised only nine values but the quantities of each printing were larger. All were delivered to Stanley with none going to the CA stocks, hence the printing is known as the 'Colonial Printing'. Unmounted mint for most values are therefore scarcer than the first printing. The paper is very similar to the first printing except that the gum characteristics are different and unique to this printing. The gum appears to be more evenly applied and should be examined in the same way, in good light to reveal a different patterning. The best description is a likeness to that seen on Chinese silk – wiggly lines running across the stamp from top to bottom (*Fig 3*). This is the key feature of the 1938 printing.

1938 top margins can be narrow, especially on the 5s. (*Fig 4*). There was insufficient room for the sheet number to be printed in the usual place on this denomination so an alternative location was selected – the left side margin, adjacent row 1. The side margins are also usually slightly narrower than examples from the 1937 printing. Numbers printed were bigger so sheet numbering can assist here in separating the new printings – if there are four digits then it comes from the second printing; if there are only three digits then it's from the 1937 printing.

There is no benchmark stamp for this issue. However, the 2d. Battle Monument in black and pale-violet is a potential candidate.

Although there is only the single SG 'Part 1' entry, specialist collectors know that the colour of the first printing is 'deep' violet in contrast to the 'pale' violet of the second printing (*Fig 5*). These comments do not over-ride my earlier printing/gum observations.

The Falkland Islands Treasury operated a 'first in/first out' policy when supplying sheets from their stock to replenish post office stocks. Table 2 gives an indication of the changeover point when stocks of the first, 1937 printings should have been theoretically exhausted and stock drawn from the second, 1938 printings began to be issued to the Postmaster to restock Stanley and other post offices. By the time this issue was withdrawn, to make way for the second definitive pictorial issue of 1952, 1938 printings were still being issued to the post office as they had not been exhausted.

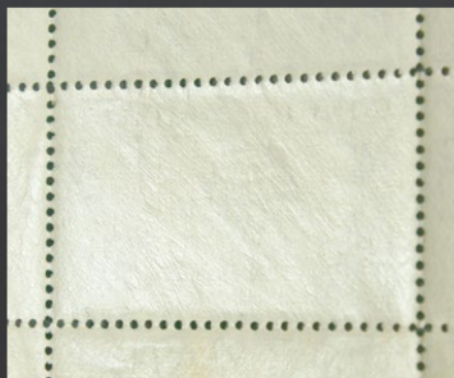


Fig 2 The crazed gum is key to identifying the 1937 printing

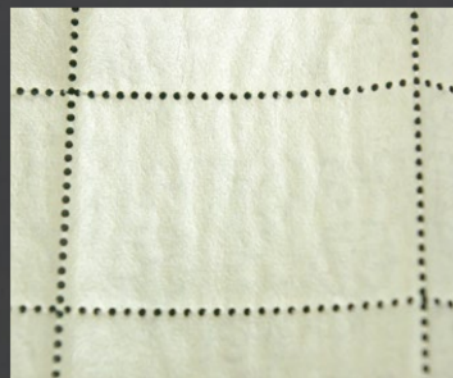


Fig 3 The 'wiggly' gum pattern of the second printing



Fig 4 Examples from the 1938 printing. Margins tend to be thinner, especially on the 5s. value and sheet numbers contain four digits due to the larger print quantities



Fig 5 The 2d. Battle Monument in black and pale violet of the second printing in 1938 (left). Next to it is the deep violet version from the 1937 printing



Fig 6 the 1d. and 2d. in new colours issued from the 1941 printing, along with the new 3d. value

### 1941 printing: despatched 20 March 1941

Three new stamps were printed in 1941 – the 1d. and 2d. in new colours and the 3d., a new value for overseas mail sent at the UPU rate to non-Commonwealth countries (*Fig 6*). The paper used for this printing is white, of medium thickness with a matt, whitish and evenly applied gum. Generally the margins are smaller. These three values were reprinted a year or so later, so they are difficult to distinguish. Colour is the key feature. 2d stamps from this 1941 printing are frequently found with a carmine-red overall tinge to the paper, unlike later printings.

The Treasury still held stocks of the old design 1d. and 2d. stamps when the new colour stamps were placed on sale.

Table 2: Date from which the Falkland Islands Treasury restocked post offices with the 1938 printings

Face value	Date of Change
½d.	December 1943
1d.	April 1942
2d.	February 1939
4d.	January 1942
6d.	February 1942
9d.	April 1942
1s.	April 1942
2s.6d.	March 1945
5s.	March 1944
10s.	July 1942
£1	May 1941

### 1942 printing: despatched 21 August 1942 and 4 September 1942

The same three values of the 1941 printing, plus the ½d. were reprinted in 1942 (Fig 7). Paper and gum are similar to the 1941 printing. Quantities printed were larger and so examples from this printing are those commonly found in collections. Identification is predominately an issue of shade.

There were to be two further printings of the 1d. in 1944 and 1947 and the 2d. in 1944 and 1949. There was one additional printing of the 3d. in 1944.

The 1942 ½d. is *greener* than the 1937 *yellow green*; the paper is medium and the gum is even and whitish (Fig 8).

Stamps from the 1944 printing are hard to distinguish so the later printings are listed here first.

### 1946 printing: despatched 24 October 1946

The 1s.3d. was a new design and was not reprinted and so can only be a 1946 printing (Fig 9).

### 1947 printing: 1d., 9d. and 1s. despatched 19 May 1947

Two dispatches of 1947 printings were made; the first was sent 19 May and comprised reprints of the 1d., 9d. and 1s. values (Fig 10). Both 1947 printings and the 1949 printing were on white thin paper. This can be identified by the design showing through when viewed from the back (see Fig 12). The gum is white. The 1s. is a deep dull blue shade without the greenish element seen in the 1938 printing. The colour match of the 1d. and 9d. was good, but tends to be slightly paler/duller, so the thin paper distinction is important when identifying this printing.

### 1947 printing: ½d. despatched 15/16 October 1947

The second dispatch of 1947 was made in October and comprised a new printing of the ½d. value. For this printing the colour is blue-green and the vignette tends towards grey-black (Fig 11). The stamp is readily identifiable by the thinness of the paper. Sheet numbered examples are rare, with only two or three known. They have only three digits in a small font, which is unique to this printing.

### 1949 printing, despatched February 1949

Three values were printed in 1949: the 2d. Swan as before, but this time on the thin paper (Fig 12); the 2½d. in a new design using the Upland Goose vignette, previously seen in the 4d. design, and a new 6d. monocolour in black. Any of these values is an ideal guide to the thin paper printings.

### 1944 printing: eight low values to 1s. despatch date not recorded

There is uncertainty on how stamps from this printing reached the Falklands. There is no record known of the printing being shipped to Stanley. Nevertheless, commercial



Fig 7 The 1d., 2d. and 3d. values from the 1942 printing



Fig 8 The 1942 ½d. (left) is *greener* compared to the yellow green of the 1937 printing (right)



Fig 9 The 1s.3d. was only printed in 1946



Fig 10 The 1d. and 9d. from the 1947 printing on thin white paper with white gum



Fig 11 The 1947 blue-green printing of the ½d. value on thin paper



Fig 12 The 1949 printing of the 2d. Swan on thin paper

covers are known correctly franked with values of this printing in the early 1950s, particularly the 9d. and 1s. values, the stamps having been purchased from a Stanley post office counter. Also, a JJ Marshall of Newquay, Cornwall sent a number of airmail covers, complete with the set of eight 1944 printings already affixed, to Stanley post office which were registered, cancelled on 10 March 1946 and returned to him (Fig 13). It seems reasonable to assume the stamps were acquired from CA stocks held in London.

With some practise, it becomes relatively easy to spot stamps of this printing. Overall, they appear to be inferior in production quality, not because of poor workmanship but because of the poor quality wartime paper provided. The paper is medium in thickness but greyish in appearance with very small coloured fibres embedded within the paper and visible on the surface (reduced availability of bleach prevented the paper maker from operating to pre-war standards). These can be seen by the collector in the majority of cases if he uses the recommended  $\times 10$  magnifying glass. Unfortunately, there is the risk that no fibres will be seen, but all the other characteristics should be present. The area of the stamp to be examined is the attached margin if available or the unprinted white areas such as around the letters 'FALKLAND ISLANDS' or anywhere else free of the printed design. Furthermore, the face of the King appears to be flatter, more coloured without the highlights the engraver achieved on the early printings. For example, the King's eyes appear to be buried within the face unlike the clear cut appearance of earlier and later printings. The 9d. is one value to look out for, as examples have a significant blue-grey wash/tint across the face of the stamp, not unlike the reddish tint of the 2d. 1941 printing (Fig 14).





Fig 13 A Marshall cover carrying the 1/2d. to 1s. values from the 1944 printing (Reduced)



Fig 14 the 9d. from the 1944 printing featuring the tell-tale blue-grey tint associated with this printing

**Specimen examples**

All 12 stamps of the original printing, as well as all three from the 1941 printing and the one from the 1946 printing (thus a full set of 16 values), were perforated 'SPECIMEN'. Quantities produced vary in the range 360 to 414 of each stamp. These can be useful benchmark stamps.

**Allocation — Step By Step**

1. Marshal the stamps in question, screen out all the benchmark stamps (all 1d. Swans, all 2 1/2d. Sheep (1937) and Upland Goose (1949), 6d. Black and 1s.3d.) and split them into two groups – mint and used.



Table 3 - Colour comparison of 1941, 1942 and selected later printings

Stamp	1941	Theoretical start of use date 3	1942	1944 (b)	Later (c)
1d., Monument	Bright Violet	Mid 1944	Purple-violet	Violet	Dull purple-violet
2d., Swan	Carmine (a)	Mid 1943	Deep carmine-red	Carmine-red	Deep red
3d.	Blue/greenish-blue	Early 1944	Deep blue	Vignette Slate black	–

This 2d. printing usually exhibits a reddish tinge across the face of the stamp. Add to the 1944 group from step 5. Turn the stamp over and check for thin paper and relative visibility of the design.

2. Perforation check. Look for any stamps, singles or multiples particularly having blind perfs, where the small disc has not been punched clear during manufacture and provisionally allocate to the 1944 printing. The 1944 printing of the 1s. value with attached top margin shows a couple of blind perfs.



Any examples with blind perf can be provisionally allocated to the 1944 printing

- 3. Remove all 1d. Monument, 2d. Swan and 3d. stamps into separate mint and used groups for later examination
- 4. Remove all high values, 2s.6d., 5s., 10s. and £1 stamps into separate mint and used groups for later examination

**Taking the low value mint group:**

5. Turn the stamps over, face down and by referring to the benchmark stamps, group by gum characteristic ('crazed' to 1937; 'wiggly' to 1938 and matt for the balance) (See Figs 2 and 3).

6. Separate the balance into two parts, those with the design showing through to the back – the thin paper group; those left should be the grey paper 1944 paper group (See Fig 12).

7. The thin paper group should contain the 1947 printings of the 1/2d.; 9d. and 1s. values.

8. Review all 1d. Monument, 2d. Swan and 3d. mint group and allocate by shade using Table 3.

9. Review the combined group from step 5 and 8(b) and check for 1944 printing characteristics: greyiness of paper and the lack of clarity around the King's eyes, coloured fibres in the paper. Many 9d. examples have a blue/grey tinge over the face of the stamp. (in many collections this could be the most prevalent, more numerous than the pre-war 1937 and 1938 and post-war printings, the mint collection having come from the post-war sales from CA to stamp dealers.)

10. Finally, cross review within each value using the Table 4, many values were printed four times during the life of the issue.

11. Allocation and Conclusion: Each stamp should satisfy both the cross check of step 10 and meet all the printing characteristics summarised in Table 5. Re-examine those that fail, reprocessing each failure again but a few days later in good natural daylight, hopefully yielding a satisfactory decision.

Table 4 - Colours of Low Values, by printing

Frame colour	1937	1938/1942	1944	1947
1/2d.	Yellow green	Green	Dull green	Blue green
4d.	Bright purple	Dull purple	Purple	-
6d. Bi-colour	Dull brown	Dark brown	Deep sepia	-
9d. Vignette	Black	Sepia	Brown-black	Black
1s.	Light dull blue	Dull greenish blue	Dull blue	Deep dull blue

## Identifying the used group

Three examples of typical 'Double Ring' cancellers in use during the period are likely to be found: from Stanley (PS2), Fox Bay (FB1) and South Georgia (SG3) (Fig 15).

After the disastrous fire that destroyed Stanley post office in April 1944, a new single-ring group (PS3) was provided, the first arrived in December 1944 (Fig 16). The South Georgia datestamp was not used after March 1944, being replaced by new FID/SG datestamp. [NB illustrations are indicative only, not necessarily correct size.]

12. Repeat steps 3 and 4, gathering two used groups for later assessment – 1d., 2d. and 3d.; and high values.

13. Face-up, split by value into three cancellation/datestamp groupings: i) double ring; ii) single ring and iii) others. The single ring series of datestamps, called 'PS3' was introduced in December 1944.

14. Analysing each value i) should be predominately 1937; look for colour mismatch which should have later dated c.d.s., if readable – these may be the later 1938 printing. Refer to the 1938 printing comments earlier in this article which gave a guide when the 1937 printing ran out.

15. Analysing each value ii) should be predominately 1938; look for colour mismatch which may have the earlier dated c.d.s., if readable – these may be late use of the 1937 printing. If different in shade/colour from both 1937 and 1938 printings review for grey paper (1944 printing) or 'thin' paper (one of the post-war printings).

16. The group iii) others, may prove to be tricky. Review against the 1937, 1938 and later allocations of steps 14 and 15. Bear in mind that double ring cancellers were in use at Fox Bay post office throughout the lifetime of this issue.

17. Review the grouping of used 1d. Monument, 2d. Swan and 3d. as suggested in step 8, but check the postmark. Double ring markings are unlikely to be seen on 1942 and later printings. Refer to illustrations of datestamp/cancellers PS2, PS3, FB1 and SG3.

18. Repeat steps 9 and 10 for the used values, bearing in mind the following points: 1944 printings, used: 9d. and 1s. are possible as these stamps were sold in the Falkland Islands, the other six values probably arise from envelopes sent pre-stamped from the UK for cancellation and return by post to sender. For confidence, recheck again for the 1944 characteristics as outlined in step 8. Post war printings of ½d., 1d., 9d. and 1s. do exist used but are generally scarce, 1s. is perhaps very scarce, whilst the 2d. is more readily available.

19. Time to look at mint high values, turn them over, face down and group by gum characteristic ('crazed' to 1937; 'wiggly' to 1938 and matt for the balance).

20. Separate the balance into two parts, those with the design showing through to the back (the thin paper group); and those left which should be the grey paper 1944 paper group, check as per low value step 9.

21. Finally, cross review within value using the Table 4

22. Taking the used group, face-up, split by value; review for first day cancellations ('Stanley, 3 JA 38'; 'Fox Bay, 15 JA 38' and 'South Georgia, 30 MR 38'); these ought to be all 1937 printings and can be useful benchmarks.

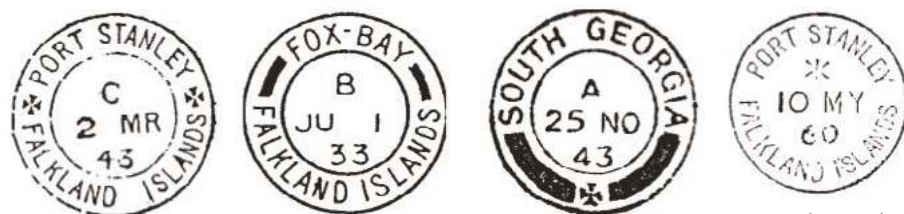


Fig 15 The Stanley (PS2), Fox Bay (FB1) and South Georgia (SG3) Double Ring postmarks

Fig 16 The Stanley single-ring Postmark (PS3)

Table 5 - Characteristics of the four major printings

	Pre-War	Wartime		Post war
	1937 and 1938	1941, 42	1944	1946-49
Paper, colour	White/creamy	Whitish	Greyish	White
Paper, thickness	Thick	Medium	Medium	Thin
Coloured fibres	No	No	Yes	No
Side margin	Wide	Medium	Medium	Narrow
Gum	Printing unique	Even	Even	Even
Gum colour	White/creamy	Whitish	Whitish	White

23. Split each into three cancellation/datestamp groupings: i) double ring; ii) single ring and iii) others. The Port Stanley single ring series of datestamps, called 'PS3' was introduced in December 1944. (Fox Bay examples will be double ring, a single ring c.d.s. was not introduced until 1968.)

24. Double ring – analyse each value: should be predominately 1937; look for any colour mismatches which if the date is readable, should have later dates – these may be early examples of 1938 printings.

25. Single ring – analyse each value: should be predominately 1938. (Note, dated examples of 1938 printings of the 2s.6d. and 5s. are unlikely before 1945; 10s. before 1941 and £1 before 1942.) Look for any colour mismatch which if the date is readable,

### Some observations

**1937 printing:** These are readily available, but less so in single unmounted condition, scarce. First day c.d.s., on or off piece, command a premium. The only printing for which specially printed f.d.c.s are known.

**1938 printing:** Readily available, but in single unmounted condition very difficult, scarce to rare, certainly in blocks.

**1944 printing:** mint examples are most commonly seen; used, however, is another matter – scarce to rare, certainly for quality dated cancellations. The cancellation, if from Stanley, should be a single ring type. An unknown number of covers, usually with a single high value 1944 stamp, were cancelled in 1949 and mailed from South Georgia.

### Acknowledgements, Thanks and References

The Jane Cameron National Archive, Stanley  
Malcolm Barton, Stefan Heijtz and Kim Stuckey

*FI Printings of the Pictorial Issue of 1938-49* by CE Glass

*FIPSG Monograph Number 5, Stamps of the Pictorial Issue of FI & D, 1938 to 1951* by AG Belfield

FRPSL  
*Specialised Stamp Catalogue of Falkland Islands and Dependencies, 1800-2013* by Stefan Heijtz

Table 6 - Colours of high values, by printing

Colour Vignette / Frame	1937	1938	1944	1949
2s.6d.	Slate	Violet-slate	Yellowish-slate	Slate-black
5s.	Blue / Chestnut	Indigo / Pale yellow brown	Dull blue / Yellow brown	Steel blue / Buff brown
10s.	Black / Orange-brown	Black / Orange	Black / Red-orange	Black / Deep reddish orange
£1	Black / Dull violet	Black / Reddish violet	Grey-black / Bluish violet	Black / Bright violet

(Currently SG 'Part 1' lists the four printings of 5s. and 10s. values but quotes a single entry for the 2s.6d. and likewise for the £1. The well-known '5s. indigo' comes from the 1938 Colonial printing.)

should be an early date – these may be late examples of 1937 printings. If there is no colour/shade match with 1937 or 1938 printings, then review for the later printings. If grey paper, allocate to 1944 printing or 'thin' paper to the 1949 printing.

26. The 'others' group may prove to be tricky. Review against the 1937, 1938 and later allocations determined by steps 8 and 9.

27. Finally, cross review within value using tables 4 and 5.

When checking your allocation, the stamp should exhibit all the associated printing characteristics – paper, perforation and colour. This can be more difficult for used examples.

**1949 printing:** always difficult to find either mint or used, blocks are simply rare! The cancellation, if from Stanley, should be a single ring type, generally dated 1951 or 1952, but certainly if earlier than 1950, regard with caution. (There is some evidence that first sales at Stanley of this printing took place in September 1949.)

There were significant numbers of covers, pre-stamped with the top four values, which were shipped to Dependency Base Post Offices for cancellation and mailing back to the sender, sometimes called 'Lea' covers. The majority have 1938 printings affixed; although a few may include an odd 1937 value. 1944 or 1949 printings are extremely unlikely on such covers. Base cancellations are often weak, incomplete and in mauve/purple ink.