

THE SPECIMEN STAMPS OF THE GAMBIA.

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The list of these given in Dalwick's "The Gambia" is both helpful and informative. Recent investigations, however, show that in some issues several varieties are found and the list that follows is an attempt to present all that is known to date of the SPECIMEN stamps of The Gambia.

The De La Rue History is both interesting and helpful as in its many pages, constant references are to be found in respect to SPECIMENS. Also the History gives much information as to the way De La Rue conducted their business.

A further article which is absolutely essential is to be found in Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia, Volume Two - Africa, on pages 424 - 432. Here Marcus Samuel, the leading expert on Specimen stamps, gives much information and a most useful check list. Also, and most important, there are illustrations of practically all the types of overprint that have ever been in use. A close study of this article is a prerequisite to an understanding of Gambia SPECIMENS.

In the following notes the page references that are given refer to pages in the De La Rue History. All references to Specimen Type Nos. refer to Marcus Samuel listings in the aforesaid Encyclopaedia.

It must be put on record that without the information given in the De La Rue History and the detailed guidance and help given by Marcus Samuel the writing of this article could not have been attempted.

On Page 287 of the De La Rue History we find on September 22nd 1870 they wrote to the Crown Agents saying that it would help them tremendously if they could "keep an impression of each forme, printed on its own paper and in the proper colour. Each label might be cancelled in any manner which you may think most advisable, but probably sufficient security would be afforded by glueing the sheet on to a piece of cardboard." The Board of Inland Revenue, they added, "have acceded to a similar request, with a proviso that each label and sheet of blank paper should be cancelled by writing the word "Specimen" across it".

The Crown Agents turned down this request.

On November 26th Warren Williams De La Rue again wrote of "The paramount importance which we attach to the keeping of a systematic record of all Colonial printing plates". They added - "We think that an impression printed on enamelled cards, which could not possibly be used for Stamps would meet all the requirements for security, and we, therefore, forward herewith such an impression for your inspection, and trust that you will not see any objection to the proposal."

"With this letter the firm sent a vertical block of fourteen Orange Free State Een Penny, in two rows of seven, each stamp having the word CANCELLED in Grotesque Bold condensed capitals."

This was approved by Crown Agents on November 28th. (For an illustration of Grotesque Bold Condensed capitals see page 158 of "Postage Stamps in the Making").

In 1879 The Gambia joined the U.P.U.

On August 27th 1883, De La Rue invoiced 500 sheets (7,500 stamps) of the 3d. Grey. There is no mention on page 382 of the History of any specimens. Here it must be remembered that the History is only an extract of the De La Rue records. Absence of information does not necessarily imply its non-existence. However, the frequency with which Specimens are mentioned on later pages does give us grounds to believe that they have all been mentioned between its covers.

On page 393 we find that the Crown Agents "have been authorized by the Government of Br. Guiana, Ceylon, Jamaica, Malta, Sierra Leone, Straits Settlements, Tobago and Trinidad, to furnish the General Post Office with one hundred specimens of any new duty of Postage Stamps ... and of any existing duties printed in new colours, for distribution among the countries of the Postal Union". De La Rue were to prepare one hundred such specimens. They continue "We shall doubtless receive a similar authority in due course from all the other Colonies for which we act". There is no indication that these specimen stamps were to be overprinted SPECIMEN. The date of this instruction was June 9th 1884.

On June 3rd 1884 (six days previously) De La Rue invoiced 106 specimens of Mauritius stamps. Vide p. 389.

On July 5th 1884 they invoiced 100 specimens of Malta stamps. Vide p. 388. On July 15th they invoiced 100 specimens of Ceylon stamps. Vide p. 390.

On February 23rd 1885, The Crown Agents requested De La Rue to increase the number of Specimens from 100 to 106. (Was this a result of De La Rue supplying 106 Mauritius specimens on 3/6/84?) See page 421 of the History.

On 18th May 1885 106 Specimens of Hong Kong stamps were supplied. There is no mention of their being overprinted "SPECIMEN". Vide p.421.

Page 393 of the History implies that 400 Specimens of Labuan stamps were supplied on 29th August 1885, but this would seem to be loose wording.

Page 425 of the History records that on September 3rd 1885 they invoiced the first printings of Gambia 1/- violet and the 4d brown. There is no mention of any specimens being invoiced.

On September 23rd 1885, 106 specimens of Malta were invoiced. "A nominal charge of 4d was made". Vide p. 422.

Page 428 of the History records a new Halfpenny for Lagos, which was invoiced on November 24th. "No specimens were mentioned".

The 29th December 1885 saw a change of colour for the Cyprus Twelve Piastres stamp and 106 specimens were invoiced. Vide p. 428.

More important, however, was the fact that on the last day of 1885 De La Rue invoiced the Gambia 2½d blue. The History makes no mention whatsoever of any specimens. Vide p.428.

The next important chronological reference is given in full -

"On January 2nd, 1886, the firm was informed that as from April 1st the quantity of specimens should be increased from 106 to 306. Their letter to the Crown Agents of January 4th proves that in the past all specimens had been overprinted, although in fact they were not always invoiced with the stamps.

'With reference to your letter of the 2nd inst., we have noted your requirements as to the specimens of stamps to be furnished up to the 31st March, and the additional quantity which have to be furnished after the 1st April next, and the instructions shall have our best attention.

'If you require us to supply you with the specimens on the occasion of each order being completed, we fear that we shall have to make some small charge for overprinting them. Until recently we have allowed the specimens to accumulate and overprinted the lot together, thus minimizing the expense.

"On January 12th the Crown Agents wrote again to say that the number of specimens was to be increased to 351, and De La Rue took the opportunity of confirming the overprinting charge - 'In batches of not more than 400 specimens at a charge of 3/6d for each duty'.

"On February 15th the Crown Agents accepted this estimate and at the same time informed De La Rue that the quantity of Specimens in future was to be 400, 'of each new duty or colour'. (Note a minute error in the History here, the C.A. letter is dated both Jan. 9th and Jan. 12th).

Page 418 dealing with Ceylon stamps is also helpful. "The final item in this invoice (dated March 6th 1886) contains the charge for overprinting stamps with the word SPECIMEN. Hitherto there has been no mention of overprinting, and the specimen stamps have been included in the quantities of normal stamps printed at the standard rate". On April 12th 1886, they charged for 106 Specimens of Ceylon 15 Cent stamps. Vide p. 418.

4th May 1886, shows that Labuan had 400 Specimens of some Colour changes. Vide p.442. The same day also supplied 400 specimens of Antiguan stamps.

Six days later, on page 444, 400 specimens were charged of Mauritius stamps: and seven days later still, on page 396, we find 400 specimens were charged to Tobago.

The next milestone for Gambia specialists is recorded on page 444 -

"The requisition for the first supply of Gambia Sixpence since the approval of the new colour scheme was sent to De La Rue on April 27th, 1856. It stipulated that the stamps should be printed in Olive Green. On June 3rd the firm invoiced 7,650 stamps and 400 specimens." (Note the misprint - 1856, should of course be 1886).

And now follows confirmations of the practice of 400 specimens -

1. 6. 86.	p. 424	St. Lucia	400 specimens
7. 8. 86.	p. 441	Gibraltar	400 "
8. 8. 86.	p. 348	Barbados	400 "
		"For distribution among the countries comprised in the Postal Union."	
4.10. 86.	p. 395	Br.Honduras	400 specimens
4.10. 86.	p. 448	Jamaica	400 "
7.12. 86.	p. 428	Grenada	400 "

"The first printing of the three low duties for Gambia in the new colours, ordered on December 24th, 1886, was invoiced on March 21st 1887. The quantities supplied were: Halfpenny, 73,110. One Penny, 30,000; and Twopence, 15,000. Four hundred specimens were also supplied." Vide p. 452.

Lagos. Page 447 informs us that some new duties were invoiced on October 12th 1886, but "The Specimens were not invoiced until a further supply was included in the Quarterly consignment invoiced on March 31st, 1887".

A new threepenny for Natal was invoiced on Feb.19th, 1889, but no specimens were sent. Vide p. 471.

On September 2nd 1892 the Crown Agents instructed De La Rue that the number of specimens was to be raised from 351 to 581. (Note the Crown Agents always took delivery of 400 previously, the excess 49 being for themselves). They go on to state "The additional specimens of Turks Islands' Postage Stamps now required, will be supplied by the Colonial Government".

"Henceforward five copies were to be sent by the International Bureau to each Postal Administration in the Union".

As a result De La Rue printed 600 copies of each Specimen.

Four days later De La Rue supplied 600 specimens on account of Selangor.

On September 12th 1892, the Crown Agents instructed De La Rue that the number of Specimens was to be increased to 730 "Together with six additional specimens for record in this office as usual, - making 736 in all". (However, it would seem that De La Rue always supplied 750 specimens.) Vide p.515.

There are now many, many references in the History saying that 750 Specimens were invoiced.

On June 14th 1893 De La Rue invoiced 155 Selangor stamps returned from the colony for overprinting Specimen.

It is interesting to read on p.523 that in respect of Seychelles they supplied not only the usual 750 specimens, but also an extra 1200 specimens, and an extra 600 specimens each of the 2c, 4c, 8c, 10c, and 13c, "of which a further supply had been ordered at the same time".

"On September 19th, 1900 the Crown Agents informed De La Rue that the number of Specimen stamps required by the Postal Union for distribution was to be reduced from 736 to 722. The quantity of 750, which allowed for more than the Postal Union Requirements, was reduced to the nett quantity of 722 henceforward. Vide p. 658.

On October 3rd 1900, 722 specimens were invoiced on Malta account. Vide p.640.

The above extracts are most helpful. It would seem in respect of the CANCELLED overprint, that De La Rue printed only a few stamps on white enamelled card (Mostly, perhaps, to throw dust at the Crown Agents) and that for their own convenience they overprinted normal stamps, as seems to be the case of the 1869 issue.

A.

1869 issue.

SPECIMEN overprint

4d.

Black	SD3	15½ mm x 1½ mm.	Marcus Samuel coll'n
Black	SD6	15 mm x 2 mm.	Mosley Coll'n in British Museum.
Blue		16 mm x 1¼ mm. sans serif.	Recorded by the late Richard Roberts.
Red		Manuscript, reading diagonally upwards, from left to right.	Whitfield. Also recorded by Robson Lowe.

6d.

Black	SD3	15½ mm x 1½ mm.	Marcus Samuel coll'n.
Black	SD6	15 mm x 2 mm.	Mosley
Blue		16 mm x 1¼ mm. sans serif.	Richard Roberts.
Red		Manuscript	Recorded by Robson Lowe, but not seen by BWASC. Is this stamp the same as Whitfield's 1874 6d?

CANCELLED overprint.

4d.

Black	CD1	17½ mm x 1½ mm.	Marcus Samuel coll'n.
Black	CD2	13¾ mm x 2½ mm. From proof sheet, flat print before embossing, on surfaced paper.	Recorded by the late Richard Roberts. Also mentioned by Lowe.
Black		on glazed card, without embossing.	Recorded by R.Lowe, but not yet seen by BWASC.

6d.

Black	CD1	17½ mm x 1½ mm	Marcus Samuel coll'n
Red	CD2	13¾ mm x 2½ mm. From proof sheet, flat print before embossing, on surfaced paper.	Richard Roberts.
Black		on glazed card, without embossing.	Recorded by R.Lowe, but Not yet seen by BWASC.

1874 issue.SPECIMEN overprint

Both the 4d and the 6d are recorded by Robson Lowe, but Marcus Samuel comments "I have never seen the 1874 4d and 6d., with "Specimen" or "Cancelled" overprint. In view of the possibility of confusion with the 1869 issue and the comments of Marcus Samuel, the existence of these two stamps must be considered very doubtful.

However, a Manuscript Specimen exists as follows :-

- 4d. Manuscript, in Red, reading diagonally upwards from left to right. Apparently in the same hand as the 1880 $\frac{1}{2}$ d and 6d., with black manuscript "Specimen", both of which, together with the 1874 6d., are in Mr. Whitfield's collection. Note the "p" is open and also the Script "S".

CANCELLED overprint.

This is unknown on the 1874 issue.

1880 issue.SPECIMEN Overprint.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| With Type SD5 - 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ mm x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. | $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d.,
1/-. | All in the Royal coll'n.
Of those in Kaufmann's coll'n the 1d. has side wmk, whilst the 2d., 3d., 4d. and 1/- are Up. |
| With Type S02 - 15 mm x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mm | $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d.,
1/-. | All in Marcus Samuel collection. |
| With Sans-serif handstamp | $\frac{1}{2}$ d. 3d., 4d. | Royal collection. |
| With Block handstamp 15 mm x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. horizontally
(Possibly the same as the Sans-serif handstamp in the Royal coll'n) | 1d. 2d. | Whitfield collection. |
| With Black Manuscript Specimen. | | |
| Diagonal | - $\frac{1}{2}$ d., (UP) 6d., (Side) | - Whitfield. |
| Horizontal | - $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 6d., 1/- (Comb) | - Harrison of Stockport |

N.B. The horizontal Mss Specimen is a different hand to the diagonal. The 'men' is bent downwards and is cramped. The 'p' is closed and the 'S' is a serified block capital. The 6d., is slanting tablet. The One Shilling is doubly perforated and very badly done at that. The Sixpence was doubly perforated by exactly one perforation, and consequently

1880 continued

is short in height by one perforation.
Did De La Rue (?) use up some defective sheets that they had by them? Obviously they would try and avoid sending such poor stuff out to the Colony.

CANCELLED overprint.

With Type CD1 - $17\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm. $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 1/-
De La Rue Records.

1886-7 issue.SPECIMEN overprint

With Type SD5 - $14\frac{1}{2}$ x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. De La Rue Records.
in RED

With Type SD5 $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 4d., and 1/-
in BLACK, heavily impressed in Marcus Samuel collection.
shiny ink

Handstamped - Block - horizontal $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d.,
15 mm x $2\frac{1}{4}$ mm 4d., 6d. and 1/-
Royal Collection and others.

Handstamped - Block - diagonal $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d. Whitfield coll'n.
15 mm x $2\frac{1}{4}$ mm

With Type SD7 in black $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 6d., Royal
 $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm collection and many others.
The first machine overprint.

Handstamped - With pronounced 6d. Kaufmann coll'n
in black serifs. The Bronze Green.
16 mm x 2 mm letter 'C' is "round"

Marcus Samuel, however, is cautious in respect to handstamped
"Specimens" -

"I am getting a little worried about these:- for many years
"the only recorded copies were in the Royal Collection and in
"mine:- now there has been quite an "outbreak" of them; worse
"still, several different types have made their appearance.
"This does not mean that I suspect them just because they
"differ from mine, but very little use was made of local "Specimen"
"overprints in West Africa, and these things could be easily
"and profitably forged. I consider it most improbable that
"more than one local "Specimen" handstamp was used, in view
"of the small volume of postal business in Gambia in those times.

"In Sierra Leone and Southern Nigeria, I know of the use of only one local handstamp, and stamps overprinted with them are extremely rare, while they do not appear to have been used at all in the Niger Coast, Northern Nigeria or Gold Coast."

CANCELLED OVERPRINT.

With type CD2 in RED - $13\frac{3}{4}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm. 3d. De La Rue Records.

1898 issue.

Machine overprinted with Type SD7 horizontally in black, $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm
 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 1/-.

All values should exist overprinted and with the Malformed "S". Mr. Turner has shown the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d and 6d., and Mr. Weldhen the 4d value.

Shade variations are known, thus SPECIMENS are not an infallible guide to the first shade of a particular stamp.

1902/5 issue.

Machine overprinted with Type SD7 horizontally, in black, $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 1/-., 1/6d., 2/-., 2/6d., 3/-.

1904/6 issue.

Machine overprinted with Type SD7 horizontally in black, $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
 5d., $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., 10d.

1909 issue.

Machine overprinted with Type SD7 horizontally in black, $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 5d., 6d., $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., 10d., 1/-., 1/6d., 2/-d., 2/6d., 3/-.

Dalwick records "All values in Black", i.e. including the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Neither Nissen or Marcus Samuel have ever seen this value so overprinted. Nissen's opinion given in 1960 was that the stamp was basically similar to the 1902 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and therefore no colour change was involved and consequently no SPECIMEN was required. It can be safely assumed that this value does not exist overprinted SPECIMEN.

E.

1912 - 22 issue.

Machine overprinted horizontally with Type SD7 in black $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm

$\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d., $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 5d., 6d., $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., 10d., 1/6d., 2/-.,
3/-., 5/-.

Machine overprinted horizontally with Type SD7 in RED

4d., 1/-., 2/6d., Note these three stamps are themselves
printed in black, consequently a contrasting
overprint was necessary.

1921 - 22 issue.

Machine overprinted horizontally in Black with Type SD7, $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

$\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d., $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d., 6d., $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., 10d.

Machine overprinted horizontally in RED with Type SD7

4/-.

Normally, a change of watermark would not necessitate a SPECIMEN overprint, but Marcus Samuel observes that for most Colonies there was a change in the K.G.V. keyplate from Die I to Die II at this time.

1922 - 27 issue. Mult Crown CA.

Machine overprinted in Black reading downwards. Type SD7.

4d., $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. These have been seen in pairs. On the 4d. pair the overprint is spaced 22 mm apart, but on the $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. the spacing is 24 mm. Presumably only a small overprint forme was used and several shifts were needed to complete a sheet.

Machine overprinted in RED, horizontally, with Type SD7a, $13\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

1/-.

1922 - 27 issue continued.

Handstruck SPECIMEN in purple, horizontally. $16\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{4}$ mm

5/-.

1922 - 27 issue. Mult Script CA

After the Cameos this issue is the most intriguing of all Gambia issues, there being no fewer than seven varieties of SPECIMEN overprints.

It is possible that the following list can be enlarged by the inclusion of perforation varieties.

a. Machine overprinted SPECIMEN in Black horizontally.
 $14\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm. Type SD7

1d.	Perf	14 line	
$1\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Perf	14 line	
2d.	Perf	14 line	
$2\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Perf	14 x $13\frac{3}{4}$	comb.
3d.	Perf	14 line	
6d.	Perf	14 line	

b. As above but reading downwards.

$\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Perf	14 line
5d.	Perf	14 line
10d.	Perf	14 line

The $\frac{1}{2}$ d has been seen in pairs, the overprint spacing being 22 mm, whilst the 5d. and 10d., have been noted with a 24 mm spacing.

c. Machine overprinted SPECIMEN in Red horizontally.
 $13\frac{1}{2}/13\frac{3}{4}$ mm x $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm. Type SD7a

1/6.	Perf	14 line
2/-.	Perf	14 line
2/6	Perf	14 line
3/-	Perf	14 line
4/-	Perf	14 line

d. As (c) but in BLACK

10/-	Perf	$13\frac{3}{4}$ comb
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e. Machine overprinted in Black horizontally SPECIMEN
 $15\frac{1}{2}$ mm x $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm. Type SD9.

4d.	Perf.	14 x $13\frac{3}{4}$ comb
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1912 - 27 issue continued

f. As (e) but in RED

1/- Perf 14 line
5/- Perf $13\frac{3}{4}$ comb.

g. Machine overprinted SPECIMEN in Black horizontally.
16 mm x $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm. Plain block capitals. Unlike type
SD9 the bases of each of the four downstrokes comprising
the letter 'M' are level.

$7\frac{1}{2}$ d. Perf 14 line.
 $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. Perf 14 x $13\frac{3}{4}$ comb.

HANDSTAMP

The 3d., is in the De La Rue Records, handstamped in RED.

Note - The 4/- value, imperf, in green and orange and
overprinted "SPECIMEN" (Marcus Samuel believes it
is Type SD7a) is a Printer's Sample, for use by
De La Rue's travellers.

1935 Issue, Silver Jubilee

Bradbury Wilkinson.
Perforated SPECIMEN in extended semicircle. Type PB2

$1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 6d., 1/-.

1937 issue, Coronation.

Bradbury Wilkinson
Perforated SPECIMEN in extended semicircle. Type PB2

1d., $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d.

1938 issue.

Bradbury Wilkinson.
Perforated SPECIMEN in extended semicircle. Type PB2.

$\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d., 3d., 5d., 6d., 1/-., 2/-., 2/6d., 4/-.,
5/-., 10/-.

1943/5 Colour Changes.

Bradbury Wilkinson.
Perforated SPECIMEN in extended semicircle. Type PB2

$1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d.

H.

1946 issue. Victory

De La Rue.

Perforated SPECIMEN in semicircle. Type PD2.

Note different shape of semicircle as compared with Bradbury Wilkinson.

1½d., 3d.

1946, 28th November. New value.

Bradbury Wilkinson.

Perforated SPECIMEN in extended semicircle. Type PB2

1/3d.

This is the last Gambia stampe that was overprinted or perforated SPECIMEN.