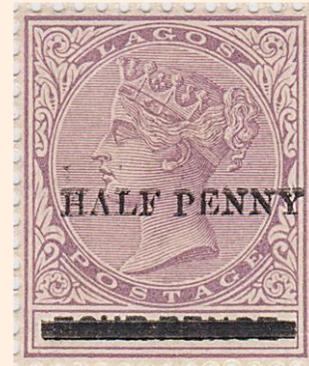


# The Lagos ½d on 4d provisional - SG42

## Introduction

Unlike most provisionals, SG42 is inexpensive (£2.50 cat), yet it is an issue which offers a lot of interest.

Shown to the right are 3 examples: one unused and two used: one with a typical Lagos killer cancel and one with a sock-on-the-nose cds – Lagos Proud type D8. I've not seen another type of cds on these stamps



The cds examples are almost certainly cancelled to order.

Post office staff at that time almost always cancelled the stamps with the killer 'obliterator' and put a cds **elsewhere** on the envelope to show posting date and office. Intact covers are decidedly scarce, and examples on piece not common.

**Alas, there's a strong suspicion that cds dates are not to be relied upon when it comes to looking at printings etc.**

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## Background

### **Why was the overprinting done?**

In 1893 there was a shortage of the ½d value (perhaps occasioned by a new ½d concessionary rate for newspapers – a popular item of mail at the time despite very few surviving). Therefore the authorities decided to overprint the 4d, pending the arrival of more ½d stamps from Britain (printed by De La Rue).

### **How was the overprinting done?**

The overprinting was done locally, using a small hand-held block holding the type for either 2 or 3 overprints. There were certainly several printings, evidenced by variation in the overprints.

### **How many were overprinted?**

No-one knows – Ince and Sacher guess at around 20,000. If the stamp was only available via postal use, it would, given attrition rates, be significantly scarcer than it is – more evidence for cto...

### **When were they overprinted?**

The earliest seen cds is 2 August 1893. There was a gap of 5/6 months before new supplies of the ½d arrived. CDS cancels occur showing dates as late as November 1894.

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## Variation in the overprints – block of two or block of three

The first run of overprints were applied as a block of **two**. In this top corner block the two right-most stamps are a separate strike of the block, and don't exactly align with the overprints on the left-hand stamps

Later printings involved a block of **three**, as shown below, in this complete row of six stamps. The three stamps on the left were overprinted with one strike of the block, which was then repositioned to apply the overprint to the three stamps on the right – as usual, not quite on the same line



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## Variation in the overprints – the HALF PENNY text

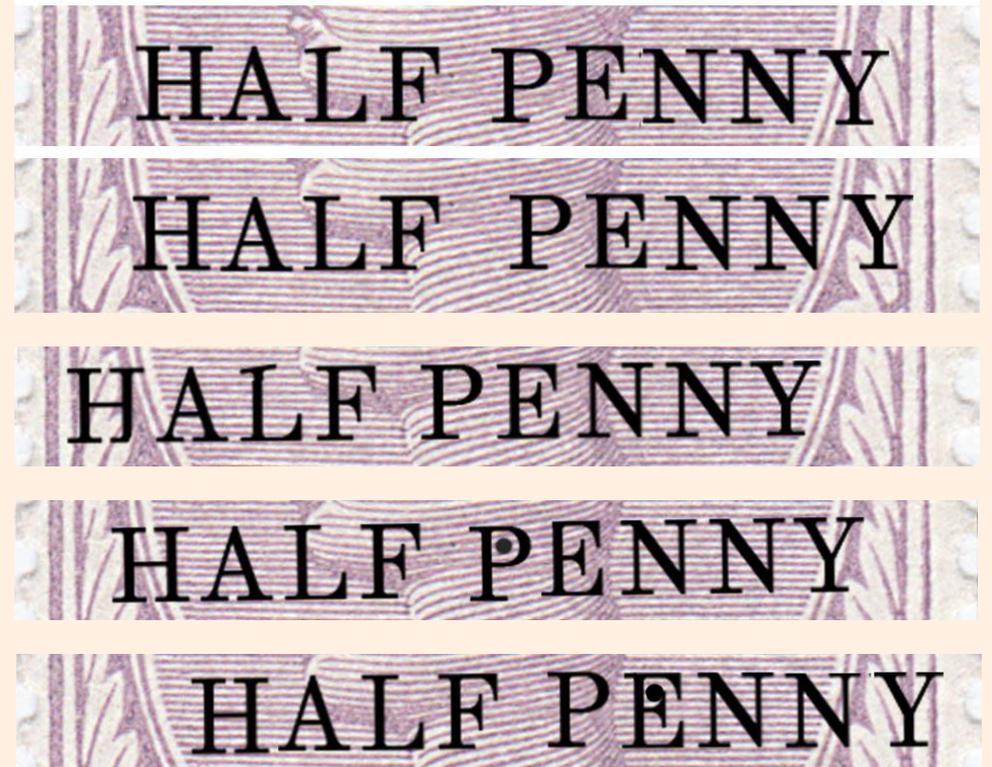
The text **line length** in the majority of printings was 16mm, with 1.5mm between the words. In the late printing F, the line is longer - 16.5mm, with a 2mm gap between.

There are cases of letters with **odd serifs**. The sloping serif L in HALF, and the missing serifs on foot of the H or the E from PENNY. Examples shown right.

**Letters with 'blobs'** in them include the P shown right, and below it, the E.

The images are taken from real stamps and tidied up to make them as clear as possible. All these variations are consistent within the printing in which they occur, and are important in helping to identify the printing

There are also letters which drop slightly below the line – not always easy to see.



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## Variation in the overprints – the obliterating bars

In all printings the bars are parallel to the text, and the same distance below it (7.1mm). Bars are often heavily inked, so the two appear to merge into one wide bar.

The extent to which bars are offset to the right of the text varies, and is diagnostic for specific printings, so too is the length of the bars, which varies from 16.5 to 17mm.

Bars may be offset a little from each other, or (as in the top 2 examples) not offset at all.



Whether the overprint as a whole is angled or not is not a diagnostic feature. It simply reflects the skill of the operator. Likewise, whether the overprints fall centrally on the stamp or to one side. However, the distance between overprints (ie from the Y of PENNY to the H of HALF on the next stamp), **within** a block of 2 or 3 can help allocate the examples to a printing

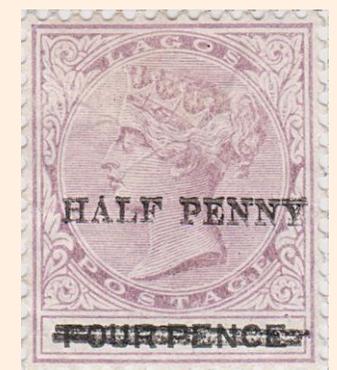
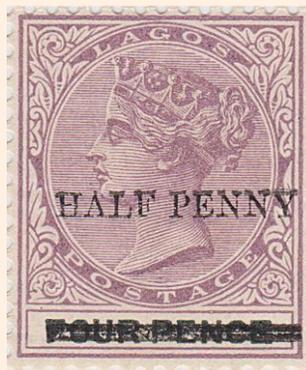
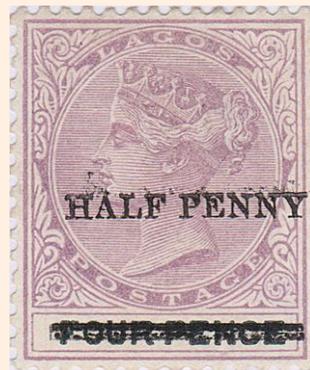
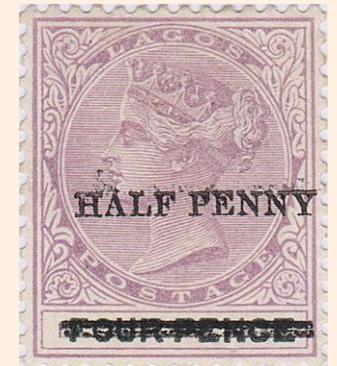
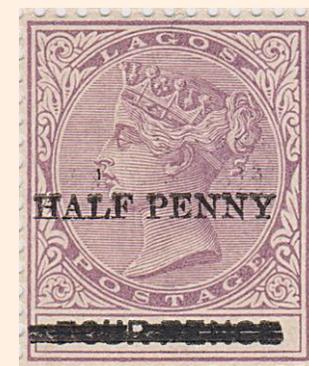
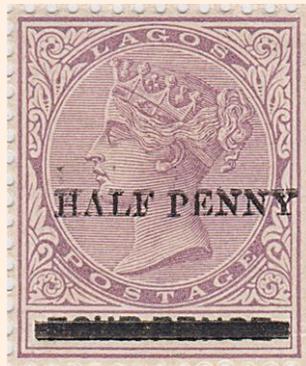
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## Variations add up to **nine** types of overprint

Reviewing a large number of examples, one can (just about) distinguish nine types, each with its own combination of text length, letter types, bar types, and right offset. These images illustrate the nine types. Redhead, in *Cameo 108* (October 2019) p137, gives full distinguishing details for each type. As the real examples show, differences can be difficult to see.

Types            1    1a   2    2a

3    4    5    6    7



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## The printings

PL Pemberton in 1935, and HG Porter in 1936, published detailed accounts, leading to classifications of the printings, which did not entirely agree. They used the overprint types, and extensive collections of multiples to work out how many separate printings there may have been. Pemberton identified six printings A, B, C, D, E, F. Porter's printings were similar but he merged Pemberton's B, C & D into one. Identifying printings really needs multiples to be able to check whole triplets.

Here's a key to the 6 printings – Redhead's article provides the explanations

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Q1. Is HALF PENNY 16.5mm across from top serif left to top serif right?        | Yes: it's printing F<br>No: go to Q2.                |
| Q2. Is there less than 3mm inter-text gap between overprints?                  | Yes: go to Q5.<br>No: go to Q3.                      |
| Q3 Is the middle stamp of the triplet type 1a (blob in loop of P)?             | Yes: it's printing D<br>No: go to Q4                 |
| Q4. Is the first stamp of the triplet type 3a (blob in above the tongue of E)? | Yes: it's printing C<br>No: it's printing E          |
| Q5. Is the overprint part of a doublet or a triplet?                           | Doublet: it's printing A<br>Triplet: it's printing B |

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## Exotic types

In addition to the differences which characterise the various overprint types, there are a number of more major varieties

1. There's the overprint on a 2d stamp instead of the 4d. After much discussion in the 1930s this was accepted as genuine (largely as a result of Pemberton's enquiry). Three examples are known to exist, only one in private hands
2. There are uncatalogued examples in which the E of PENNY is missing its foot, so appears as F. This does not appear to be a constant flaw.
3. Then there are the double and treble surcharges. Doubles are scarce and trebles are rare. However, 'doubles' are commonly offered on Ebay, (often from dealers who perhaps should know better) which aren't really doubles but are 'kiss' prints. True doubles catalogue at £55 – so more than 20 times the cost of the 'ordinary'.

Surcharge trebled need very careful examination. The example to the right shows three lines of text but the bars are only doubled.



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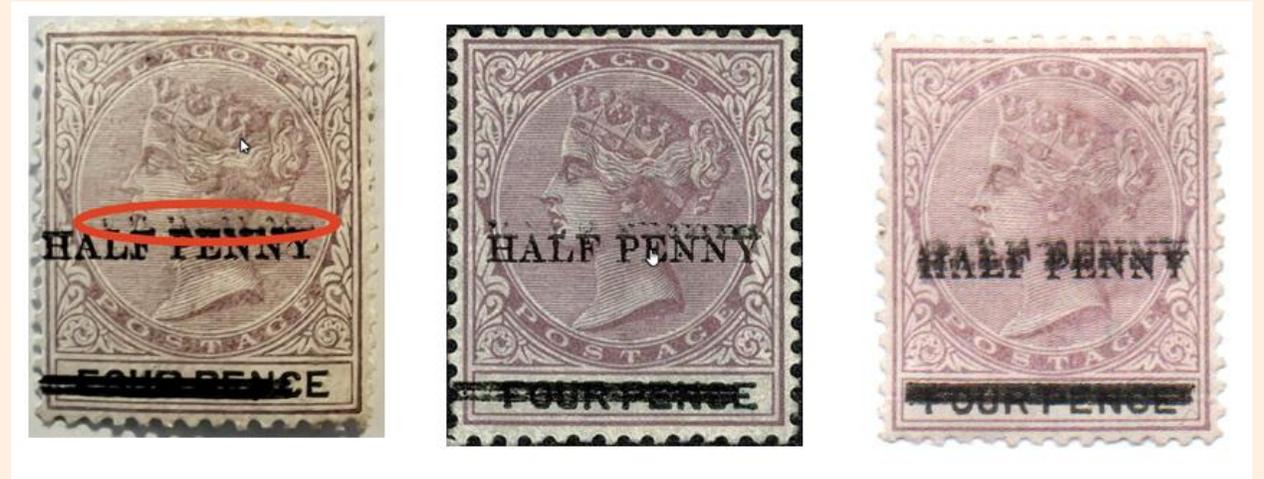
## When is a 'double' merely a kiss?

Here are three examples offered online as doubled overprints, and priced accordingly. All three are actually just 'kiss' prints.

'Kiss' prints occurred when the inked block was offered up to the stamps, touched the surface, but was then moved to a better position before being properly pressed down. The first touch, in this case almost always the upper text part of the block, left a trace.

Kiss prints tend to be faint, and only rarely show any trace of the bars.

The next slide shows some true doubles.



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## True double overprints

True doubles occurred when the printing block was fully applied to the stamps twice, usually because the first impression was positioned so badly that the bars on at least one of the stamps missed covering the FOUR PENCE. Thus doubles tend to show two lots of bars properly (ie fully) impressed. The text is usually doubled too, but occasionally it is only the bars. Here are two blocks with 'triplet' overprints showing true doubling.

And finally, what about this one - kiss or double? It has two lots of bars but one lot are pretty faint. Was this a kiss print, where the bars just touched as well as the text, or should we give it the benefit of the doubt? Note that the bars in both cases cover the FOUR pence – it didn't need a full second strike

