

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

In late 1915 an agreement was reached between Canada and Bahamas under which Special Delivery facilities for letters was arranged. A supply of 600 5d stamps overprinted 'Special Delivery' was sent to Canada and were on sale at post offices in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg. This was in addition the normal postal rate.

The SD stamps were not sold over the Post Office counter, but were affixed to the envelope by the postal clerk. Up to late 1916 the Special Delivery stamp received a Canadian cancellation. Belatedly it was realised that this contravened Canadian postal regulations, and from 1917 it was left to be cancelled on arrival in Nassau.



Earliest known cover. Toronto duplex cancelled 'Oct 12 1916' and backstamped '18 Oct 1916' on arrival in Nassau. BPA cert. No. 34,505



Toronto duplex cancelled '20 NO 1917' and Special Delivery stamp cancelled at Nassau '26 NOV 1917'. The Special Delivery stamp is from Vig. Plate 1, position 33.

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

1st May 1916

Overprinted locally at offices of Nassau Guardian

Wmk. Crown CC

Three separate overprintings were made on the three printings of the 5d value originally supplied in Dec. 1902, May and Sept. 1903. The first was from Vignette Plate 1, the last two from Plate 2. The Plate 1 printing is distinctive in that the vignette impression is in black, but is grey-black on the two Plate 2 printings.

A further distinction lies in the side margin perforation. For the Plate 1 printing the side margins are perforated through to the edge of the margin, but the Plate 2 printings have just four or five perforation extending into the side margin.



Setting 3



Setting 3

The first overprinting of 600 stamps (10 sheets) was made on sheets from Plate 1 only. The second overprinting (quantity unknown) and the third of 6,000 (100 sheets) was made on sheets from both Plates 1 and 2.



Setting 3



Setting 3

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1st May 1916

Overprinted locally at offices of Nassau Guardian

Wmk. Crown CC

For each of the three separate overprintings the type was re-set, and hence the precise positioning of SPECIAL in relation to DELIVERY differs in most cases for each stamp position between the three overprintings. These are known as Settings 1, 2 and 3. The easiest comparison points are obtained by noting where extending the 'I' in SPECIAL intersects with DELIVERY, and similarly where the 'I' in DELIVERY intersects with SPECIAL.

Except for blocks whose position is identifiable from marginal markings, it is necessary to identify the sheet position of a given example by referring to the plating characteristics listed in Ludington's *Bahamas: The Locally Overprinted Special Delivery Stamps of 1916-17*. This in turn can permit the Setting employed for the overprint to be determined.

Position	37	38
Setting 3	ECIA LIVE	ECIA LIVE
Setting 2	ECLA LIVE	ECI LIVE



Setting 2



Setting 3

Position	49	50
Setting 3	ECIA LIVE	ECIA LIVE
Setting 2	ECLA LIVE	ECL LIVE

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Special Delivery

1st May 1916

O'ptd locally at offices of Nassau Gazette

Wmk. Crown CC

The overprint type was assembled as a setting of 30, and hence it was necessary for the 60 set sheet to be fed through the press twice to overprint both left and right halves of the sheet. In the example below the mis-alignment in overprint position between each half of the sheet may be seen.



Position 6 & 7

Different vertical and horizontal alignment between left and right panes

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery - Re-entries

Stamp No.4

Re-entry on the Vignette Plate - upward shift in both cliffs, especially down left side of left cliff and right side of right cliff. Slight doubling of bottom step.



Setting 3

Stamp No.6

Re-entry on Frame Plate - shifted transfer, broken line above 'HAM', line in top of centre ornament, line above 'TA'. The most easily seen identification characteristic to determine the sheet position is the missing top serif of 'S' in 'BAHAMAS'.

missing top
serif of 'S'



Normal



Setting 3

ECIA
LIVE



Setting 2



Setting 2

ECIA
LIVE

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery - Re-entries

Stamp No.12 (half extra tree-trunk /rifleman variety)

Re-entry on the Vignette Plate - upward shift in both cliffs, especially left of large tree-trunk at upper left.
A small but heavy plate scratch appears through the right of the two figures at the bottom of the staircase.



Opt. Setting 2

Printed from Vignette Plate 1 (perforated thru to edge of side margin)

Vignette in black



Opt. Setting 2

Printed from Vignette Plate 2 (not perforated thru to edge of side margin)

Vignette in grey-black

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery - Re-entries

Stamp No.40

Re-entry on the Vignette Plate – leftward and slightly downward shift in both cliffs, especially in upper side of right cliff. Large tree-trunk at upper L partially double. Slight doubling of portions of R balustrade and steps.



Printed from Vignette Plate 2.

Setting 2

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery - Re-entries

Stamp No.56 (extra tree-trunk variety)

Re-entry on the Vignette Plate – shift leftward and slightly upward, particularly noticeable in doubling of large tree-trunk at upper left.



Normal



Extra tree-trunk



Opt. Setting 3

Printed from Vignette Plate 1
(Vignette in black)

ECIA
LIVE

No.56
Opt. Setting 3



Opt. Setting 3

Printed from Vignette Plate 2
(Vignette in grey-black)



Opt. Setting 2

Printed from Vignette Plate 1
(Vignette in black)

ECL
IVE

No.56
Opt. Setting 2



Opt. Setting 2

Printed from Vignette Plate 2
(Vignette in grey-black)

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

MAJOR ERRORS

1. Overprint Double

At least six panes of 30 are known of this variety, which differ in both the horizontal and vertical position of the second overprint.



From Fig. 1
Setting 2 of Opt.

Brandon Cert. 31040
(2004)



2. Overprint Inverted

Although it is often stated that only one pane of 30 was issued, in fact at least two panes were affected.



BPA Cert. 15520
(1992)

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

2nd July 1917

Printed and Overprinted by De La Rue

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

A new supply of 510 sheets of the 5d Special Delivery in black and orange was sent from the printers on 29th May 1917, but by this time the watermark had changed to Mult. Crown CA. An anomaly lies in the fact that the colour of the 5d value without overprint had changed to black and mauve for a printing made of this value in April 1917.



Printed from Vignette Plate 2



Letter from Toronto to Bahamas, Canadian stamps cancelled with Toronto duplex '17th Oct 1917' and Special Delivery stamp cancelled at Nassau

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

2nd July 1917

Printed and Overprinted by De La Rue

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

Vignette Plate Varieties



Half extra tree trunk / rifleman variety



Extra tree trunk

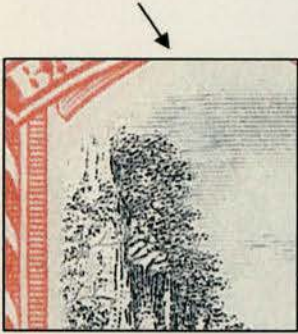
The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

21st July 1917

O'p'd in London by De La Rue

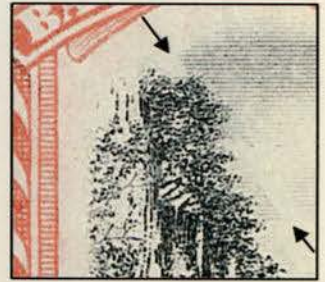
Wmk. Mult.Crown CA



No. 13

A scratch thru the sky area has been partially filled in, and the hatching lines of the clouds re-engraved.

No. 13



No. 26

The scratch on No. 13 continued into No. 26 and has been filled in. In this case no attempt has been made to re-engage the clouds.

No. 26



No. 13



No. 13



No. 13

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

21st July 1917

O'ptd in London by De La Rue

Wmk. Mult.Crown CA

No. 19



No. 20



No. 31



No. 32

No. 32
(scratches enhanced)

Plate 2 was extensively scratched, with No. 32 being one of the most pronounced examples.

No. 43



No. 44

No. 55



No. 56
Extra
tree-trunk
variety



No. 32

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

5th March 1918

O'ptd in London by De La Rue

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

Colour change to Mauve



1/2 TT ↑



Letter from Toronto to Bahamas, Canadian stamps cancelled with Toronto duplex, Special Delivery stamp cancelled "6th Jul 18" at Nassau.

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

5th March 1918

Printed and Overprinted by De La Rue

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

Vignette Plate Varieties



Half extra tree trunk / rifleman variety



Extra tree trunk

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Special Delivery

21st July 1917

O'p'd in London by De La Rue

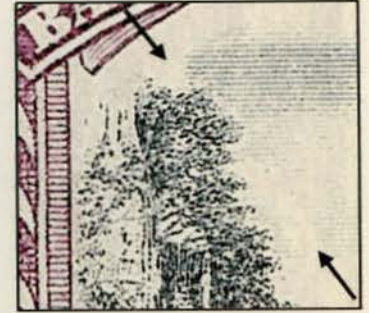
Wmk. Mult.Crown CA



No. 13

A scratch thru the sky area has been partially filled in, and the hatching lines of the clouds re-engraved.

No. 13



No. 26

The scratch on No.13 continued into No.26 and has been filled in. In this case no attempt has been made to re-engrave the clouds.

No. 26



No. 13



No. 13



No. 13



No. 13