

The Queen's Staircase Issue 1900 - 1929

The Queen's Staircase descends one hundred feet from Fort Fincastle to a path leading to Union Street in Nassau. The flight of 65 steps was cut from the virgin rocks, although the date of construction is unknown.



The stamps were printed in recess by De La Rue in sheets of 60 (5 x 12). A steel master plate for the vignette was produced from which a series of working plates were subsequently made. A master frame plate was made, from which working plates were produced for each value, the value being entered separately.



Imperforate Plate Proof
of the Vignette in blue

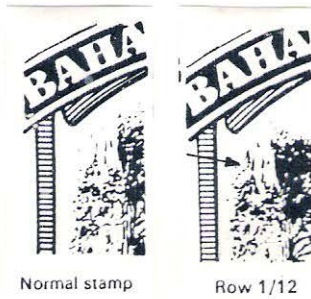


Imperforate Plate Proof on thin paper,
Wmk Crown CC inverted

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Varieties on the Master Vignette Plate - Half Extra Tree-trunk/Rifleman

The process that produced the 'Extra tree-trunk' variety also resulted in a similar variety being created on stamp 12. In this case the effect was not so pronounced and only the left side of the extra tree-trunk is visible. A plate scratch across the right hand figure at the bottom of the staircase has the appearance of a rifle.



The Queen's Staircase Issue

Varieties on the Master Vignette Plate - Extra Tree-trunk

An incorrectly positioned impression from the transfer roller on stamp 56 required that this impression be rolled out (under great pressure from the roller), and that a fresh entry be impressed on to the plate. A small portion of the original impression (the top left corner tree-trunk) remained on the plate, and therefore shows as an extra tree-trunk.



The Queen's Staircase Issue

1900-1903

Recess printed by De La Rue

Wmk. Crown CC

Perf 14



2nd Aug. 1900 722 Specimens issued



29th Dec 1902 727 Specimens issued



Specimens additionally overprinted ULTRAMAR by the Portuguese receiving authorities and distributed to the five Portuguese colonies. Only 25 sets can exist.

The Queen's Staircase Issue

1901-03

Wmk. Crown CC

Printings from Vignette Plate 1 (sheets of 60)



Aug 1901, 4,115 shts
medium paper



May 1902, 188 shts
thin paper



May 1902, 91 shts
thin paper



May 1902, 102 shts
thin paper

The Queen's Staircase Issue

1901-03

Wmk. Crown CC



Block of 18 from the first printing from Vignette plate 1 and Frame plate 1



The British Library
9600-15011

The Queen's Staircase Issue

1901-03

Wmk. Crown CC

Registered philatelic cover from Nassau to Wilmington, Delaware, bearing the complete set of the wmk. Crown CC issue, the 2s value with Vignette Plate 1 imprint being from the first printing in May 1902.



Posted Nassau 6 January 1906, date-stamped January 10 on rear on receipt at Wilmington.

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

1911-19



On bright lemon



On buff



The Queen's Staircase Issue

27 April 1917

A new value, the 3d, and a change in colour of the 5d value to mauve and black, were introduced.



Horizontal strips of three from the Madagascar archives, as distributed by the UPU. Each is cancelled with a strike of the red receiving handstamp "POSTES ET TELEGRAPHES MADAGASCAR/COLLECTION DE BERNE".

23 March 1919

A change in colour of the 3d value to brown and black.

The 2nd DLR War Tax overprint was issued on 14th July 1919.



The 2nd DLR War Tax overprint was issued on 14th July 1919.

The Queen's Staircase Issue

6th December 1918

Reqn. 71/18 - 200 sheets were printed, supplied on two different shades of thick paper.



Purple on yellow orange
(thick greyish paper)



Reddish purple and purple
on buff (thick paper)

A number of half sheets were supplied with this requisition, and in these cases the separate left and right panes were sheet numbered, above stamps 6 and 12 respectively.

The Queen's Staircase Issue

23 March 1919

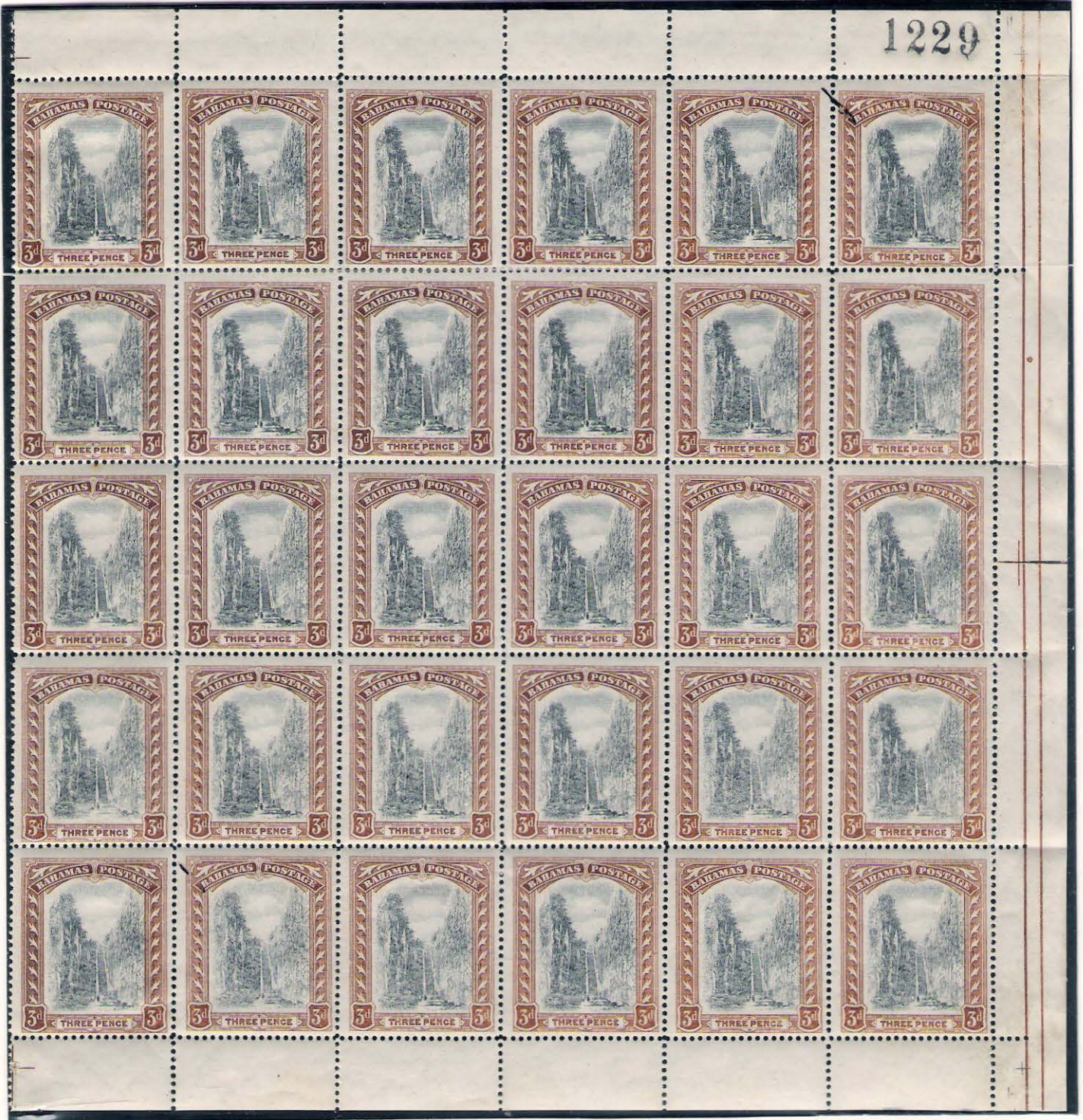
Colour Change to Brown on White

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

Printed from Vignette Plate 4

Half extra tree-trunk/
rifleman variety

1229



No.56 - Extra
tree-trunk variety

The Queen's Staircase Issue

27 April 1917

Change of Colour to mauve and black

Wmk. Mult. Crown CA

A single printing only of 497 sheets of 60 from Vignette Plate 2 was made.



Half extra tree-trunk/ rifleman variety on No.12



No.55

No.56

No.57

Extra tree-trunk variety on No.56

The Queen's Staircase Issue

Madagascar Specimen Overprints Wmk. Mult. Script CA

Horizontal strips of three, as distributed by the UPU, with strikes of the red receiving handstamp "POSTES ET TELEGRAPHES MADAGASCAR/COLLECTION DE BERNE". It is believed that the later 5d value (1929) does not exist in this format



The Queen's Staircase Issue

1921-29

Wmk. Mult. Script CA

Perf 14

1d value printed from Vig. plate 4, Frame plate 1



1921 - 24 3 Printings
Grey-black and red



410 Specimens issued



24 Jul. 1922
Vig. Pl. 4



409 Specimens issued



21 Jul. 1924
Vig. Pl. 4

The Queen's Staircase Issue

1921-29

Varieties on 3/- value

Printed from Vignette Plate 4.



← Half extra tree trunk/
rifleman variety



← Retouched scratch
through clouds

Double perforated at right



These two blocks may
originate from the same sheet

PHOTOCOPY
Cavendish Auctions
March 2004, Lot 407

The Queen's Staircase Issue

1921-24

Wmk. Mult. Script CA

Perf 14

Printings from Vignette Plate 4,
each with half extra tree trunk/rifleman variety on No. 12



The Queen's Staircase Issue

1921-29

Wmk. Mult. Script CA

Change to comb perf 14

Vignette plate 5 was made in 1926. By this time the master plate was badly worn, and this is particularly noticeable in the clouds, which are very weakly printed. The 1d and 2/- were the only values printed.



9 Mar 1926 Vig. Pl.5 Fr. Pl.1
black and deep aniline red



30 Sep. 1927 Vig. Pl.5

Because of the worn state of the master plate it was decided to deepen the die and produce a new transfer roller. Impressions were taken directly from the transfer roller for the making of Plate 6. This can be seen clearly in the lines forming the sky area. The 1d and 5d were the only values printed.



429 Specimens issued



27 Jun 1929 Vig. Pl.6
Grey-black & carmine-red



27 Jun 1929 Vig. Pl.6
Grey-black & Mauve

The Queen's Staircase Issue - War Charity

1st January 1919

Printed from Frame Plate 2, Vignette Plate 3

The Colonial Office considered the Red Cross issue "an improper use of the Geneva emblem" and the Bahamas authorities decided to change the overprint to "War Charity" and the date to "3.6.18". The order was not received by De La Rue until 17 June 1918, the stamps being despatched on 16 October and placed on sale on 1st January 1919.



Extra tree trunk/rifleman variety



Extra tree trunk variety

The Vignette plate number was usually trimmed off the sheet.

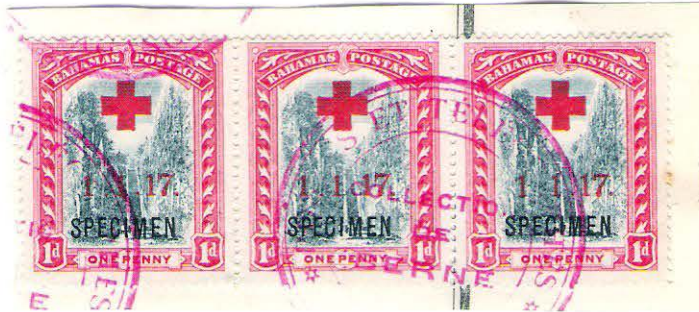
Only two examples showing the vignette plate 3 imprint are known to exist.

The Queen's Staircase Issue - The Red Cross Overprints

18th May 1917

Printed from Vignette Plate 2, Frame Plate 2

As a contribution towards the funds of the Bahamas branch of the British Red Cross Society it was decided to overprint the 1d Staircase value with the Geneva Cross and "1.1.17". Despite the date on the stamp the order was not received by De La Rue until 29th December 1916, and the stamps were not ready for issue until May 1917.



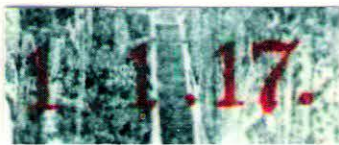
Specimen strip of 3 from Madagascar archive



Berne Specimen



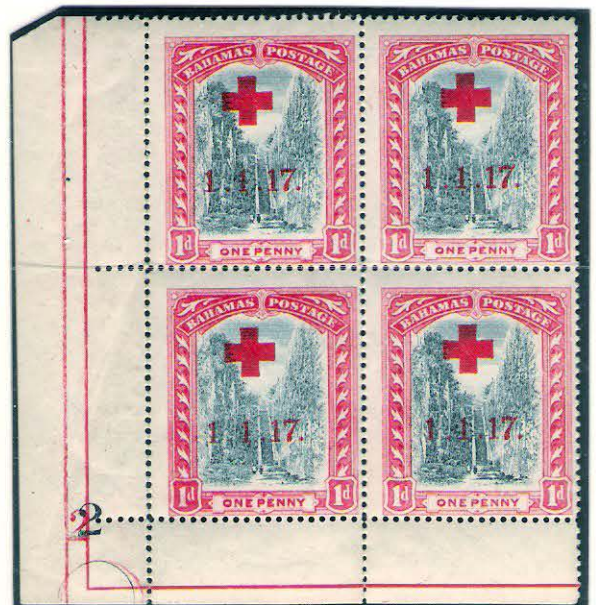
Half extra tree/trunk/
Rifleman variety



Long stroke to '7'



Normal



The Queen's Staircase Issue

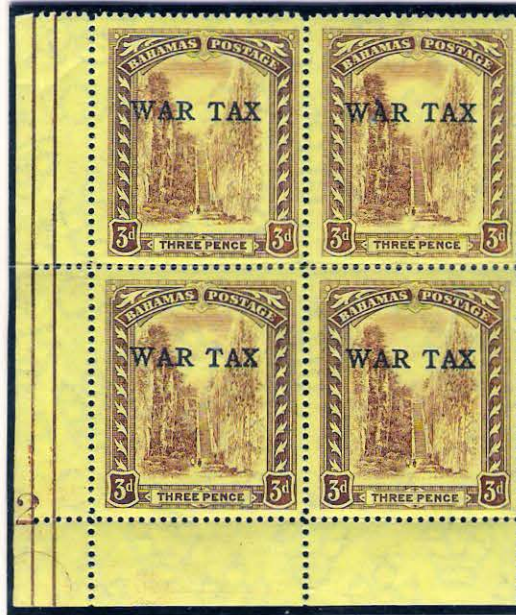
The War Tax Issues

21st Feb. 1918

The Legislature decided to apply a War Tax to certain postal articles, and 40,000 of the 3d value from existing stocks were overprinted at the offices of the Nassau Gazette. A setting of 30 was employed, and hence two printing operations were required to overprint the sheets of 60.



Half extra tree trunk / rifleman variety



Printed from Vig. plate 2,



extra tree trunk variety

10th Jul. 1918

Because of a delay in receiving a stock of 1d War Tax overprints from London it was decided to overprint 48,000 of the existing stock of the 1d Staircase value. These were on sale for ten days only and were withdrawn upon receipt of the De La Rue overprints from London.



Printed from Vig. plate 2,
Frame plate 1



Half extra tree trunk / rifleman variety



extra tree trunk variety

The Queen's Staircase Issue

The War Tax Issues

20th July 1918

War Tax in one line, sans serif lettering

Printed from Vignette Plate 3



specimen



extra tree trunk variety



1/2 extra tree trunk / rifleman variety

21st March 1919

Colour Change to brown on white

Printed from Vignette Plate 4



extra tree trunk variety



1/2 extra tree trunk / rifleman variety



Different sheet number style to example above

The Queen's Staircase Issue

The War Tax Issues

14th July 1919

War Tax in two lines, sans serif lettering

Printed from Vignette Plate 4



specimen



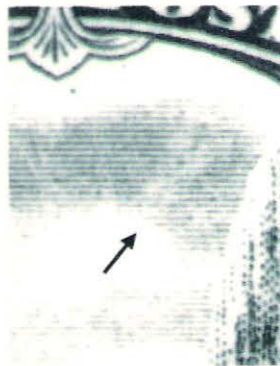
Specimen with inverted watermark



extra tree trunk variety



½ extra tree trunk / rifleman variety



No.24 – retouch through clouds

The Queen's Staircase Issue

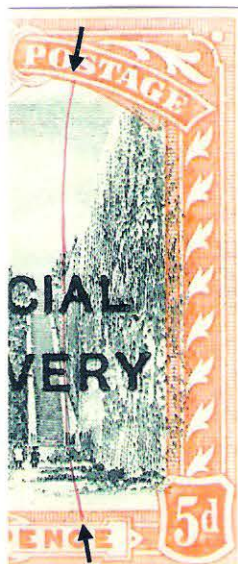
Plate Scratches

A number of the plates display surface scratches, probably caused by cleaning of the plate on completion of a printing. These often provide conclusive proof of plate identity on specific examples.

Heavy diagonal scratch crossing base of staircase.
Row 5 stamp 2 - from Vignette plate 2



Vertical scratch through sky down to value tablet.
Row 1 stamp 7 - from Vignette plate 2



The Queen's Staircase Issue

Retouches to Vignette Plate

Some attempts were made at retouching some of the plate scratches that developed, but these were usually only partially successful. Other retouches were to strengthen the shading lines in the sky area.

Diagonal scratch partially retouched in sky shading.

Row 2 stamp 1 - Vignette plate 2



Shading lines in sky heavily retouched.

Row 3 stamp 7 - Vignette plate 5



retouched

normal

