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# British Central Africa and Nyasaland Protectorate.

By Fred. J. Melville.



*Brawford 1306(2)*

British Central Africa

**And Nyasaland Protectorate.**

BRITISH CENTRAL  
AFRICA

And Nyasaland Protectorate.

By

Fred. J. Melville,

President of the Junior  
Philatelic Society.



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Sir Harry Johnston, K.C.B.  
*From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry.*



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

**W**E have to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office for permission to publish the map of the recently formed Nyasaland Protectorate, and to the Hon. Secretary (Mr. R. W. Hatswell) of *St. Martins le Grand Magazine* for some of the interesting postal subjects and the postal organisation map of British Central Africa, as well as for the free use of much interesting material from the pages of the Magazine. Our thanks are also due to the Secretary of the British South Africa Company, and to Messrs. Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co., for information they have courteously rendered to us; and to Mr. W. H. Peckitt for the loan of many of the rarer stamps illustrated. Mr. S. R. Turner has contributed several useful diagrams, Mr. G. T. Turner has placed his collection of "specimen" stamps at our disposal, and Mr. D. B. Armstrong has supplied some interesting notes.

The proofs have been revised by Mr. P. L. Pemberton and Mr. H. H. Harland.



CA

"Crown CA."



CC

"Crown CC."



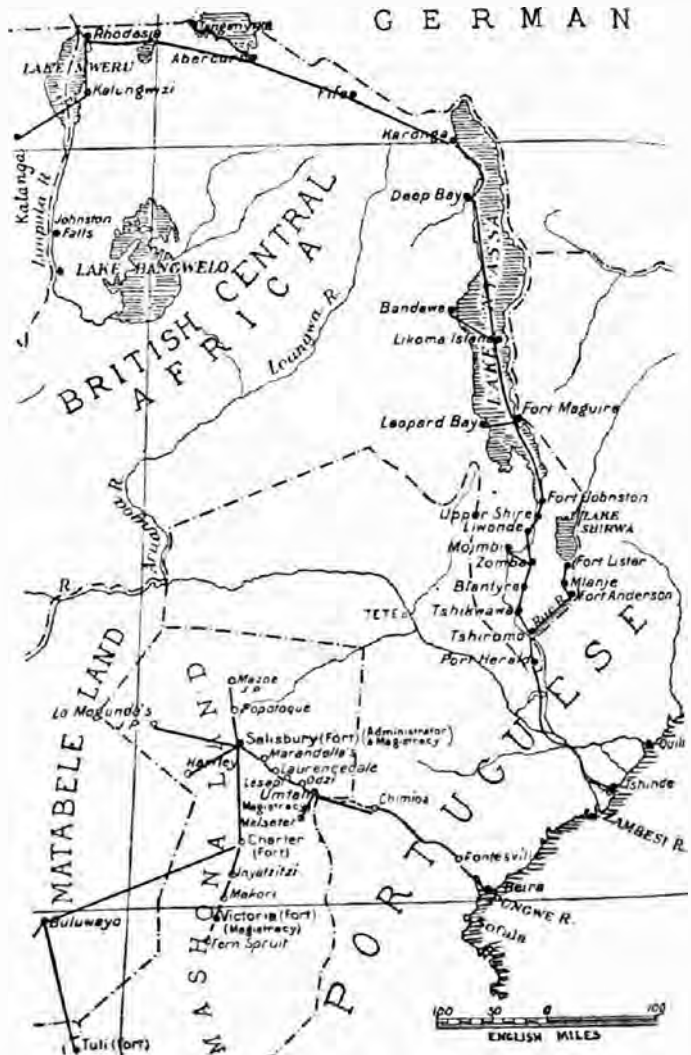
"Multiple Crown CA."

Watermark Designs.

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Postal Organisation Map of British Central Africa.



# British Central Africa.

## CHAPTER I.

### Postal Arrangements.

**T**HE Protectorate of British Central Africa (now the Nyasaland Protectorate) and the Sphere of Influence of the British South Africa Company in Central Africa lay north of the Zambesi, in the South Central portion of the African continent. The territories brought under British Influence, chiefly under the direction of Sir Harry Johnston, K.C.B., were bounded on the north by Lake Tanganyika and the Congo Free State ; on the north-east by German East Africa, and on the east, south-east and west by Portuguese possessions.

Sir Harry Johnston, in his *British Central Africa* (London : 1897) says that the Sphere of Influence is much larger than the actual Protectorate, which is chiefly confined to the districts bordering on Lake Nyasa and on the river Shiré. The Sphere of Influence is administered under the Charter of the British South Africa Company ; the Protectorate has always

been administered directly under the Imperial Government from the time of its inception (1891). The Protectorate was formally declared May 14, 1891, and the designation suggested by Sir Harry Johnston, of the British Central Africa Protectorate, was officially adopted February 22, 1893.

In the early part of 1891 there was no organised postal service in the new Protectorate, and letters for Europeans were usually conveyed by the African Lakes



Post Office, Tshiromo (1894).

Company's steamers to the Vice-Consul at Quelimane, accompanied with the money for postage stamps, to be affixed by that official. Thus the letters were sent home or received through the agency of the Portuguese Post Office, franked with Portuguese stamps.

The institution of a proper postal service began in earnest in 1893, when the Postmaster-General of Cape Town (Sir Somerset French) was applied to for the loan of an officer of his department to organise the posts of the Protectorate. Mr. H. H. Harry, of the Cape

Town Post Office, was "lent," and left Cape Town on May 11 for Tshiromo. He established, shortly after his arrival, a service of mail runners from Port Herald to Mpimbi on the Upper Shiré river (via Tshiromo, Tshikwawa and Blantyre), with numerous intermediate connections, and regular weekly mails in each direction between Tshiromo and Blantyre, a three-times-a-week



Post Office, Blantyre (1894).

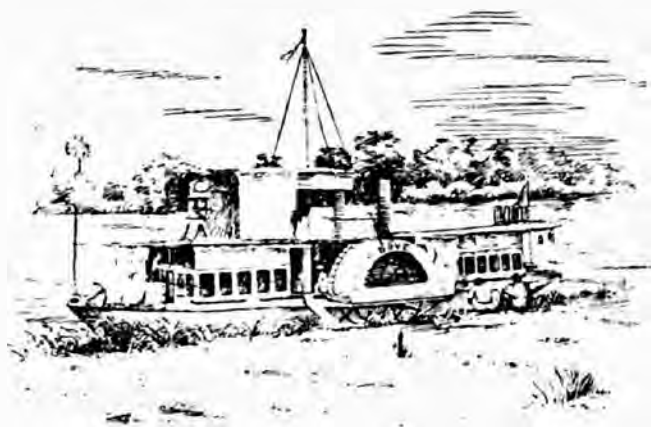
service between Blantyre and Zomba, each way, and a once-a-week service between Blantyre, Mlanje, Mpimbi and Fort Johnston.

Post offices were established in 1893-4 at Blantyre, Fife, Fort Anderson, Fort Johnston, Fort Lister, Fort Maguire, Kalungwizi, Karonga, Mlanje, Port Herald, Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Tshikwawa, Tschinde, Tshiromo, Mpimbi, Zomba, Johnston Falls, Abercorn, Deep Bay, Likoma, Leopard Bay, Fort Liwonde, and Fort Rosebery.

The details of the early organisation of the post in the Protectorate are best given in Mr. Harry's own words :—

“ Zomba, owing to the unsettled state of the country in the northern portion of the territory, is in special communication with Fort Johnston and beyond. Mails from the United Kingdom and foreign countries are landed at the Tschinde mouth of the Zambesi—the port of entry for British Central Africa—are sorted at the Office of Exchange there, and are forwarded by steamer up the Zambesi and Shire to Port Herald or Tshiromo, as opportunities offer.

“ During the dry season the Lower Shire is rarely navigable above Pinda or Port Herald, and runners have, accordingly, to be utilised for carrying the bags on to Tshiromo ; between Tshiromo, Tshikwawa, Blantyre, Zomba and Mpimbi runners are used exclusively, while from Mpimbi to Fort Johnston the gunboat, “ Dove,” and



The gunboat, “ Dove,” used for mails from Mpimbi to Fort Johnston.

houseboats manned by natives are available. Mails are conveyed from Fort Johnston to the various ports on Lake Nyasa by the German Government steamer, "Wissmann," and the African Lakes Company steamers, "Domira" and "Allala," and from Karonga to the south end of Lake Tanganyika and across to Lake Mwero and Johnston Falls by runners. The Offices, with the exception of Mlanje, where an educated native woman from Old Calabar is in charge, are manned by Englishmen, and the methodical way in which the work is performed by them—very often under most trying conditions—is worthy of the highest praise.

"Our mail carriers, clad in long frock coats, knickers and fez—minus boots and stockings—present a picturesque appearance. They are always armed when on service, and appear to be very proud of their Snider rifles.

"An amusing—though at the same time regrettable—case occurred some months ago near Blantyre, in which a carrier lost a mail bag containing nothing but a supply of postage stamps for the Postmaster of Mpimbi. After giving a truly pathetic account of the rainy weather met with, he stated that he tried to cross a swollen stream, and found, when the middle was reached, that he must either sacrifice his bag or rifle, or face destruction in the shape of being washed away. Upon scant deliberation the bag was allowed to go in order that his cherished fire-arm might be saved. So far as I am aware, it has not yet been recovered.

"During the rains the low-lying portions of Central Africa are flooded for many miles, and at that season of the year a poor carrier's lot is not a happy one. In February last [1894] two carriers carrying mail bags between Mpimbi and Zomba were confronted by several lions. Deeming discretion to be the better part of valour, they sought safety in the high branches of a friendly tree, and waited until their leonine majesties condescended to move on to pastures new.

"The runners are selected from various tribes, among them being Chikunder, Man'Ganja, Atonga, Angoni, Yao and Makua.

"The work of our Postal Department is increasing by leaps and bounds, and in the near future its operations will have to be considerably extended. We have now [1894] a

direct service to Katanga, in the Congo Free State, via Lake Mweru, and serve as intermediary for the conveyance of German Nyasaland mails \* to the coast."

Between November 19 and December 28, 1893, Mr. Harry was in Chinde establishing a Post Office of Exchange on the British Concession there. At this office mails are landed from or transferred to the ocean going steamers.

Sir Harry Johnston defines the functions of this Post Office of Exchange :—

"Letters or other material arriving from the outer world at Chinde are sorted at this Post Office of Exchange into bags for the various postal districts in British Central Africa, and into bags for the German territories and for the Congo Free State, and are then shipped up river by the various steamers plying between Chinde and Chiromo. At Chiromo the bags are sent overland to the different Post Offices of distribution between the Lower Shire and Lake Nyasa, being carried by native postmen who wear a special uniform of scarlet and white. These men travel at the rate of 25 miles a day, and are wonderfully faithful and careful in the delivery of their precious charges. Cases have been known where postal carriers have been drowned in the crossing of flooded rivers by their obstinacy in not parting from their mail bags, and where they have fought bravely and successfully against odds in an attack by highway robbers. The negro of Central Africa has a genuine respect for the written word. Of course, the time will come when, attendant on the growth of civilisation, native postmen will probably commit robberies of registered letters, as is occasionally done by their European colleagues; but at the present time our mails are perfectly safe in their hands."

Mr. Harry, who was "lent" for one year to the British Central Africa authorities, returned to Cape

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\* Sir Harry Johnston states that, in return for this service, the B.C.A. correspondence between Chinde and Zanzibar was carried by the German subsidised steamers.

Town in 1894, and was succeeded by Mr. J. E. McMaster as Postmaster-General of the young Protectorate. Later Mr. McMaster\* became Vice-Consul at Chinde, Mr. J. T. Gosling following in the control of the Post Office Department.

Mr. Gosling has left some interesting records of postal work in British Central Africa, and was, we believe, the introducer of the first postal guide issued in the Protectorate, set up and printed by native Africans at the Blantyre Mission Press in 1899. This publication is now issued annually, and we quote from it the Queen's Regulations respecting the Mail Service made under the provisions of the "Africa Orders in Council, 1889 and 1893," by Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul General for the British Central Africa Protectorate.

#### QUEEN'S REGULATIONS.

1. It is unlawful for any person, unless employed in the Postal Service of the Protectorate, to send or convey any letter from any place within to any place without, or from any place without to any place within the Protectorate, or from place to place within the Protectorate, except the following—

(a) Letters to or from any place not being on the route along which the post travels.

(b) Letters concerning goods or other property to be delivered, such letters being sent with, or for, the purpose of being delivered at the same time as the property they concern, without hire or reward for delivering the same.

(c) Letters sent by any private friend in his way, journey, or travel, so as that such letters shall be delivered by such friend to the party to whom they may be directed,

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\* We are informed that Mr. McMaster was assassinated shortly after taking up a new position as British Consul at Beira.



or by any messenger sent on purpose concerning the private affairs of the sender or receiver thereof. But no person shall make a collection of such letters hereby excepted, for the purpose of sending them in the manner hereby authorised.

2. The following persons are expressly forbidden to carry a letter, or to receive or collect or deliver a letter within the Protectorate, although they shall not receive hire or reward for the same, that is to say—

(a) Common carriers of passengers or goods, their drivers, servants, or agents, except a letter concerning goods in their custody for carriage.

(b) Owners and masters of ships and their servants and agents, except letters solely concerning goods on board, and to be delivered with such goods.

(c) Officers and servants employed in the postal service of the Protectorate, except letters received, conveyed, or delivered by them in course of post.

3. The importation or exportation of books, newspapers, or parcels passing through the post and not yet delivered by the recognised postal service of the Protectorate to the persons to whom the said books, newspapers, or parcels are addressed is strictly prohibited.

4. Every person sending, despatching, carrying, collecting, receiving, or delivering any letter, book, newspaper, or parcel contrary to these Regulations, shall be guilty of an offence, and liable to a fine not exceeding £1, in respect of every letter, book, newspaper, or postal parcel.

5. In these Regulations, "letter" includes "postcard," and "ship" includes every description of vessel used in navigation.

A curious development of the letter-box is one of the features announced in the Postal Guide.

#### POSTING OF LETTERS IN MAIL CARRIERS' LETTER BOXES.

1. In districts where there is a considerable population residing on or near the mail routes, the mail men are

equipped with light metal boxes having a suitable aperture in the top, to permit of the posting of letters.

2. Persons desiring to post correspondence by this means must meet the mail man in the roadway at some point on his journey.

3. The aggregate weight of letters, etc., posted by any one person, or from any one house, estate, or mission must not exceed 8 oz.

4. Neither parcels nor registered letters can be posted in these boxes.

5. The boxes may not be used for the purpose of posting letters in townships (except where an organised collection of letters may be made), or in the vicinity of a Post Office.

6. If the mail men are detained or taken from their route, or if the boxes are used in any way contrary to the regulations, their employment will be discontinued on the particular route upon which this occurs.

Mr. J. T. Gosling, Postmaster-General of British Central Africa, writing in 1903, gives an interesting account of the state of postal affairs in the Protectorate, from which we quote at length by permission from *St. Martins le Grand*.

"The absence, hitherto, of a railway, or of any general provision of vehicular transport, has led to the adoption of special modes of conveyance for man and goods; and in the case of mails forwarded overland, the negro has entirely supplied the place of beast or machine.

"Dotted over the country, at intervals of twenty miles or so along its main roads, are mail men's rest-houses. Here natives wearing the uniform of the Protectorate Post Office wait to perform allotted tasks, which may consist of conveying a mail bag to the next rest-house every second or third night—the men taking turns and travelling about eighty miles a week in all—or in dealing with the more irregular mail from England, for which they may have to wait a week if the steamer is late. Whichever it be, the mail goes on from rest-house to rest-house, night and day, each succeeding gang of men, on reaching the hut which marks the end of their

section, handing the bags over to their fellows in waiting. If it be night they awaken them from their slumbers, and lie down alongside the fires in the vacated places.

“For the local mails passing between the different settlements two men per section are allowed, whilst the larger mails from countries oversea may require as many as forty.

“Of course this organised system had a beginning. At one time the mails were forwarded by day only, and direct from station to station. A native would be sent off with a bag of correspondence, and told to take it to its destination, which might be any distance up to a hundred miles. He would travel about twenty miles a day for the longer distances, and perhaps as much as forty miles in twenty-four hours where this completed the journey; but in such cases he would, as a rule, be fit for little the following day. When the method of conveyance by relays of mail men travelling mostly at night was first introduced, old settlers said that the men would be eaten by lions; and the men who commenced the new service were accordingly equipped with lanterns and rifles; but after a while the lights were given up as not worth the trouble of carrying, and, although rifles are sometimes still taken, it is generally when a wild beast has been visiting the villages in the district to be traversed. It must not be assumed that lions are not encountered. Cases have occurred where the mail men have been driven to take refuge in a tree, and leave the bags at the foot to be smelled and pawed and discarded as inedible by disappointed beasts of prey, and mails have sometimes been delayed on that account. But there are lions and lions. I know a “White Lion” in a Surrey village, who, to my certain knowledge, has often delayed the mail. It would be incorrect to suppose, however, that the native of British Central Africa is a drunkard, or that, when employed as a mail man, he frequently proves unworthy of his post. As a matter of fact, the mail service is conducted with marvellous punctuality, and instances of encounters with the alcoholic lion are comparatively rare.

“Experience shows that, provided a route is well travelled by day, it is fairly safe to traverse at night, and the mails have been sent by night for the past five years without any injury to the men employed. Leopards are more common



Postmen of the British Central Africa Protectorate.  
*Drawing from a Photograph.*

than lions ; but they are usually more anxious to steal sheep or other small domestic animals than to encounter men and women.

“ As a rule, the native mail men are wonderfully faithful and trustworthy. Careful record is kept of the men engaged, even to the marks or scars upon their bodies ; but only one case is known where a carrier made off with the bag entrusted to him. They stick to the bags, too, under circumstances of considerable danger. . . .

“ This system of conveyance of mails by relays of carriers is an essential feature of the postal communication of the Colony. Nearly all local mails are conveyed by night in this manner, and letters posted one evening are delivered the next morning at stations forty miles away.

“ It is recorded of the British Central Africa mail men that they once went on strike. The men employed at a certain Post Office presented themselves *en masse* to the Postmaster one morning, and said they were going away to their villages. Asked why, they expressed dissatisfaction at receiving less pay than the mail men employed at an Office some forty miles away. Six shillings a month was not enough for them, they said, as their fellows were paid eight. The matter was ‘righted’ by a reduction of the higher scale ; and the original malcontents showed a fine disregard of the ethics of striking by proving themselves very ready ‘blacklegs’ when the men at the second Office were inclined to resent the diminution of pay.

“ The calling of mail man is rather a popular one with Nyasaland natives. The post is fairly well paid as native pay goes ; and in this regard it must be remembered that natives do not, as a rule, work for Europeans in order to obtain food—that they get from their gardens—but in order to obtain money to buy clothing for themselves and their wives. They have, further, the advantage that, in order to cover their eighty miles or so per week, they have only to perform some four or five journeys, and thus, compared with natives employed in other spheres of labour, they have abundant leisure.

“ In addition to the mail men, there are a fair number of natives engaged as indoor assistants. These can, in most instances, read and write, and sometimes speak English. They

are often capable of sorting the letters and making up the mails, but are not, as a rule, allowed to do this without the supervision either of an Indian Clerk or of the Postmaster.

“The correspondence conveyed in the mails of Nyasaland is for the most part posted by the European settlers; but there is a fairly large native correspondence also. At one time the native did not make use of the post office, or, if he did so, did it in an irregular way by getting the mail men to carry letters unofficially. Even now it is often found that a letter sent by a native in one village to a friend in another contains enclosures from almost every person in the community who can write, and, indeed, from some who cannot—a sort of village secretary filling the breach where necessary.

“Comparatively few of the natives can read and write at present. Some write in Suahili, but the majority in their own language, using European characters. The mail men, as a rule, cannot read or write; and sometimes this leads to complications, as, for example, where a mail has to be passed on to a ‘relay’ at a rest-house remote from European supervision, and the arriving mail men are late. The men who are to take the bags on to their destination know full well that unless they can make up the time there will be trouble when they arrive; and formerly it was the practice to insist on the delinquents going through to the end of the journey—another twenty miles or so—to admit and explain their fault. As this arrangement, although calculated to ensure punctuality, was apt to delay the return mail, it was explained that the uniforms, which are numbered, would do as well; and the clothing is now taken instead of the men. That is to say, the late arrival has to surrender his uniform jacket, which is taken through to the next post office in order that a note may be made of the number, and the matter ‘suitably noticed.’ For the addresses and the bags, too, special provision has to be made; and coloured labels, or brass tablets of different shapes and design, serve to indicate to the untutored savage the particular destination for which the bag entrusted to him for conveyance is intended.

“In addition to the overland services by relays of natives, mails are conveyed by steamers on the Zambesi and Shire rivers and on Lake Nyasa. They are small screw steamers carrying a few passengers, and make the passage round the

lake every now and again as occasion requires. Gunboats were placed on the lake when its coasts were the headquarters of slavers, and slave dhows used to carry living cargoes between its shores. Times, however, have changed; and instead of criticising the 'inactivity of the Nyasa gunboats' in the matter of slavery suppression, the missionaries around the shores of the lake are now apt to grumble that these vessels are not used to bring their mails so frequently as they would wish."

The year preceding the change of the name of the Protectorate to Nyasaland Protectorate (1906-7), a number of reductions in postage rates were introduced, and the business done in the Post Office Department had assumed considerable proportions. A railway had been opened and was in use for the conveyance of mails between Port Herald and Chiromo, and the construction of a continuation from Chiromo to Blantyre was being proceeded with. The estimated number of articles posted in the year was 374,536, an increase of 53,632 over the previous year, when 320,904 articles had been sent. 904 letters were returned to other countries as undeliverable as against 686 in the previous year, and 473 undeliverable local letters as against 642 the year before.

The chief items in the postal report are thus summarised :—

	1905-6.	1906-7.
Oversea mails received, - -	348	407
"    despatched, - -	302	318
Inland parcels <i>per month</i>		
Zomba, - - - -	4	32
Blantyre, - - - -	21	52
Chiromo, - - - -	8	8
Foreign parcels received, -	2618	3023
"    despatched, -	516	553
Value of foreign parcels received (gross), - - - -	£3017 4 0	£3647 3 9

Revenue transferred to Customs

Department, - - -	286	19	0	302	0	6
Exports (postal), - - -	465	4	5	500	7	10

By an order in Council of July 6, 1907, the name of the country was changed to Nyasaland Protectorate, and in the first report of the Nyasaland Protectorate we find continued good progress in the business of the Post Office. The 1 oz. unit of weight for correspondence was adopted, and the sample post rates were reduced from 4d. per 4 ozs. to 1d. per 4 ozs. The German East Africa line of steamers having reduced the sailings of their fast boats to once every three weeks, an arrangement was entered into for sending mails for London via Beira and Salisbury, connecting with the Union Castle boats at Cape Town. Correspondence for South Africa was also sent via Beira or Delagoa Bay to Johannesburg, which last office acts as distributing agent. Imports by parcel post were valued at £3914 as against £3647 3s. 9d. the previous year.

The following is a summary of the regular postal statistics.

The total number of postal articles dealt with was 1,101,917 as compared with 612,284 the previous year :—

	1906-7.	1907-8.
Letters, - - -	434,126	866,632
Postcards, - - -	19,898	31,888
Newspapers, - - -	98,168	155,468
Book packets, etc., - - -	55,211	42,644
Parcels, - - -	4,805	5,078
Closed bags, - - -	76	207
	<u>612,284</u>	<u>1,101,917</u>



PURE LINEN  
EXTRA STRONG  
Wove BANK



Sheet Watermark of  
William Collins, Sons & Co.



## CHAPTER II.

### Stamps of the British South Africa Company Overprinted "B.C.A."

#### ISSUE I.

**T**HE first issue of postage stamps for the British Central Africa Protectorate was created in 1891, by overprinting the issues of the British South Africa Company with the large Roman capitals B.C.A. The denominations current at the time in the Company's territory of Southern Rhodesia were fourteen in number, 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., 8d., 1/-, 2/-, 2/6, 5/-, 10/-, £1, £2, £5, £10. The original stamps had been engraved by the London firm of Messrs. Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co., Ltd., in *taille douce* and on thin greyish-white wove paper. The paper has the manufacturers' (William Collins, Sons & Co.) watermark once to the sheet. It consists of a monogram W.C.S. & Co. (the C enclosing the other letters of the monogram), with the word EXTRA to left and STRONG to right. Curved watermarked

letters above read PURE LINEN and below WOVE BANK, the whole of the lettering and monogram being in outline characters.

There appear to be slight variations in the sheet watermark. In one variety the number 139 is added below in addition to the marks described above, while in another the words EXTRA STRONG do not appear.

The paper varies from thin, semi-transparent paper to an opaque paper of medium thickness.

The design of the original stamps (all values) has for its central device the arms of the British South Africa Company :—

Blazon : Gules, the chief semé of bezants, the base semé of ears of wheat, or, a fesse wavy argent between two bulls passant in chief, and an elephant passant in base, all proper : the fesse charged with three galleys, sable.

Crest : A lion guardant passant, or, supporting with its dexter fore-paw an ivory tusk erect, proper.

Supporters : Two springbokken, proper.

Motto : " Justice, Freedom, Commerce."

A white arched tablet at the top of the stamp contains the word BRITISH in letters of colour, and a wavy tablet of colour immediately below it contains the white capitals SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY. The value tablet is below the arms design. The whole of the background is composed of horizontal lines of colour. There is a line all round at the extremity of the shading of the background, broken into at the top by the white label containing the word BRITISH. An additional thin outer rule completes the stamps of the values 1d. to 10/-.



The inscription of value on the 1d., 6d., 1/-, 2/-, 5/-, and 10/- stamps is in words of outline capitals on a bevelled tablet shaded with slanting lines.



On the 2d., 4d., 8d. there is no tablet inserted, but the value is printed in coloured Roman capitals TWO PENCE, etc., and these three denominations have the value printed in a different colour from the rest of the design.



In the 2/6 stamp a bevelled tablet is used, but the ground of the tablet is without any lines of shading and the words TWO SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE appear in coloured sans serif capitals.



The higher values, £1, £2, £5, and £10 have the value tablet similar to the 1d. value, but the whole of the design described for the lower values has been enclosed in an additional and ornate scroll work frame, considerably enlarging the size of the stamp.

Messrs. Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. inform us that

the original stamps were only engraved in sheets of sixty stamps, *not*, as has been suggested recently by a writer on the Company's stamps, in sheets of 240. There were no special printings of the original stamps required for the overprinting, and the Company in each case sent back quantities of the already printed stamps to be overprinted. The overprinting was done at frequent intervals between the years 1891-1894.

Stereos were made from type, and, as the engravers state that only one font of type was used, the occurrence of thick and thin lettering which appears to be fairly regular on the printed sheets must have been due to the stereotyping. The complete sheet of 60 was overprinted at one impression in the case of the low values 1d. to 10/-; but in the case of the £1, £2, £5, £10 a few were in each case overprinted singly, as also were the £25 and £50 values used for revenue purposes.

The letters B.C.A. are large block capitals  $3\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high, and a period occurs after each letter. There are distinct variations in the thickness of the lettering occurring on the same sheet which are divisible into *thin* and *thick* letters, and there are minor varieties of the stops, which are normally square but occasionally round, and in the seventh stamp on the top row the final stop appears to have joined the right leg of the A.

The stamps were supplied by the British South Africa Company at the request of the Commissioner of the British Central Africa Protectorate, who also administered the Northern Territory belonging to the Company.

The first issue was despatched from London in April, 1891, though we find no chronicle of them in philatelic journals prior to October of that year.

With the exception of the 2d., 4d., and 8d., the stamps are printed in single colours, and there are but few variations in shades, the 6d. having the widest range.



ISSUE II.—In the original series of British South Africa there was no 4/- denomination, and the need of such a value, possibly not alone for postal but also for fiscal use in the Protectorate, brought about the issue of a provisional stamp. The words **FOUR SHILLINGS**, in two lines of heavy sans serif capitals, were surcharged in black on the 5s. orange-yellow stamp of the 1891 issue. The measurements of the additional overprint are letters  $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high, top line  $5\frac{1}{2}$ mm. long, bottom line 12mm. from "S" to "S." The issue of the provisional is ascribed to August, 1892. No varieties of this additional overprint have been noted.

ISSUE III.—This provisional stamp was in use only a few months, being superseded by a regular 4s. stamp almost concurrently with the introduction of a stamp of that denomination in the British South Africa Company's set in 1893. The new regular issue 4s. stamp was similar in every respect to the other values except that the value is impressed on a plain white ground in small coloured block capitals, in a separate

colour from the rest of the stamp. The colours were slate for the design and vermilion for the value, and the consignment was forwarded in February, 1893.



ISSUE IV.—A 3s. provisional issue was made in October, 1893, being created by overprinting twenty-three sheets (of sixty stamps) of the newly issued 4s. slate and vermilion stamp, with the words THREE SHILLINGS in two lines of elongated sans serif capitals in black. The surcharge measures: letters,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mm. high; top line,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  mm. long; bottom line, 12 mm. from "S" to "S." The issue is said to have been limited to twenty-three sheets, making a total issue of 1380 stamps.





ISSUE V.—This stamp was replaced two years later (October, 1895) after the British South Africa Company had in March, 1894, prepared and issued a regular 3s. stamp for their other territories, by a regular 3s. overprinted B.C.A. The design and lettering of value was similar to the 4s., but the colour of the design was light brown, and the value was impressed in green.



ISSUE VI. (Provisionals).—In 1895, the stock of one penny stamps having run short, a quantity of the 2d. sea-green and vermilion were said to have been permitted by the High Commissioner to be bisected diagonally, and each portion to serve as a stamp of the value of one penny. The permission was given to the postmasters at Blantyre, Chiromo, and Zomba, and it is further stated (*London Philatelist*, V., 236) that this was only for a day or two, and that only fifty of these provisionals were used.



At the same time preparations were made for a properly overprinted provisional stamp of one penny value. The order was entrusted, in the first place, to the local printing office at Blantyre, and the 2d. sea-green and vermilion stamp was selected for the overprinting of the words ONE PENNY.

According to Mr. Whitfield King, whose information was derived not many months later (July, 1896) from the Postmaster-General, Mr. J. E. McMaster, "the type was set up to surcharge a sheet of 60, the printer having stringent orders to see that the type on every stamp was identical, so that there should be no varieties. Some proofs were struck off on plain paper and submitted for approval, when some few alterations were found necessary. When at last the types were approved the printer was told to get ahead with the printing, but apparently he found that putting a sheet of thin gummed and perforated stamps into his printing press was quite a different thing to putting in a sheet of plain thick paper, consequently, the first sheet came out with the surcharge misplaced, being much too high, so that the bar which should have cancelled the word 'TWO PENCE' was a great deal above it. The printer

thereupon put the sheet in a second time, but even then the bar was a little too high and not straight. Now, at this point, my memory is at fault ; I do not remember whether the printer refused to take the responsibility of printing any more surcharges, or whether it was the Postmaster-General who declined to let him do any more, but at any rate the printer submitted this first sheet of 60 stamps to Mr. McMaster, who passed it, but no more of these provisionals were made at Blantyre. A parcel of 2d. stamps was then despatched to the Government printing office at Cape Town, accompanied by one of the double-surcharged stamps, with instructions to have the surcharge as nearly of the same type as was possible."

Mr. King's account of the events is doubtless correct in the main, and tallies with the history quoted from "an unimpeachable source" in *Stanley Gibbons' Monthly Journal* for October 31, 1896 (VII., 58) :—

"There is a history going the round of the magazines in reference to certain copies of the 'ONE PENNY' on the 2d. of the British South Africa Company, with double surcharge. The story is that 100 sheets were sent to the Government printing office at Blantyre to be surcharged; that the first sheet was put through the press twice over, presumably to show the Postmaster how nicely they could do it. The P.M., however, was not satisfied, and sent the other 99 sheets to Cape Town to be adorned; and thus is accounted for a double overprint which differs in type from the single one.

"This history comes from an unimpeachable source, and we have no doubt that it is perfectly true; but we think that waste products of this kind should be destroyed, instead of being preserved for sale to collectors."

Mr. King's statement that the sheet of the Blantyre surcharge was "passed" by the Postmaster-General, if



Cape Town Printing.  
Complete Vertical Row,  
showing third stamp with double surcharge.

it is to be taken as meaning that he allowed them to be used for regular postal purposes, must surely be an error, for the ultimate destination of a good proportion of the sixty stamps so overprinted is not unknown, and the copies are unused.

The chief difference between the Blantyre setting and the Cape Town one is the presence of a full stop after PENNY in the latter, the period being absent in the former. The Cape Town type is heavier and slightly taller than that set up at Blantyre, the O is narrow and elongated in the Cape Town, and more rounded in the Blantyre. The bar of the Cape Town is thick and long (18mm.); in the Blantyre it is thin and short (16½mm.).



Overprinted at Blantyre.

The arrangement of the type in the Cape Town surcharge is not known with any certainty, but from

the occurrence, on different rows, of a complete row of double surcharges it is surmised that the surcharge was applied one row at a time. Mr. P. L. Pemberton mentions a sheet which had the fourth row doubly surcharged, and the strip we illustrate (page 37) shows a double surcharge in the third row.

Another sheet Mr. Pemberton describes leads him to believe that there were two settings. We quote his remarks (*Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*, XVIII., 171):—

"Of the Cape Town type there is pretty good evidence of two distinct settings of the surcharge. I have an entire sheet before me, on which the sixth stamps of PENNY set rather below the level of the rest of the word. It is quite certain, judging by this and other evidence, that this sheet was printed from a stereo made up of three horizontal rows of ten surcharges, which was impressed twice on the sheet. With the exception of the slightly depressed NY there is no semblance of a variety on this sheet. Yet there is a well-known and marked variety in which the "Y" of PENNY is dropped considerably below the level of the rest of the word. Several years ago I had an entire sheet in which this variety occurred, but, unfortunately, it was broken up before I took a note of how many there were on the sheet and what positions they occupied. It certainly occurred more than once. However that may be, it is certain that the setting was different from that in which the slightly depressed "NY" occurs. This sheet was memorable for having the fourth horizontal row doubly surcharged; it is puzzling to know how this could have occurred unless each row was surcharged separately, and I am inclined to think that this is the solution."

It does not seem to us probable that the surcharge was printed in any other way than direct from the type, as the number printed was so small, and the occasional irregular depression of a letter or two letters seems to confirm our belief that no stereo was made. On some

of the stamps the O of ONE is also slightly depressed, and this, we believe, is a characteristic of small runs of type widely spaced from each other, and would occur chiefly at the beginning or at the end of the overprint. At the same time, we would not dismiss the possibility of several rows being compressed in one setting, and even this would admit of the occasional double row, if one block of thirty was printed with the top row overlapping the bottom row of the upper thirty, thus leaving the bottom row of the bottom block unsurcharged, to be filled in by applying the top row of the type to the unsurcharged bottom row.

In regard to the two varieties of double surcharge, the Blantyre and the Cape Town types, Mr. Pemberton very properly points out that "the Blantyre variety was never issued to the public, whereas the Cape Town type is a genuine error. Both command good prices, but the latter is not only more desirable as an issued stamp but is also scarcer."



Overprinted at Cape Town.



### CHAPTER III.

#### British Central Africa Protectorate Issues.

##### ISSUE VII.

**T**HE term for which the British South Africa Company had agreed to contribute towards the cost of the administration of the territory being near expiration, and other causes, brought Sir Harry Johnston home to England in April, 1894. The time had come when the development of the Protectorate required its administration to be placed on a thoroughly sound basis, and it was necessary for Her Majesty's Government to consider the financial provision requisite for the future maintenance of the Protectorate.

Sir Harry spent the summer and autumn in England making these arrangements, the results of which were that the Civil Service was thenceforth efficiently organised, and the South Africa Company's subsidies were devoted to the administration of the Company's own territory; the direct administration of which was taken over by Sir Harry Johnston in 1895.

The Civil Service of the Protectorate and the Postal Service, Sir Harry tells us, were put on a satisfactory footing. A postage stamp was designed and issued.



The design of this is attributed to Sir Harry himself, and it is an adaptation of the heraldic emblems which he designed with the assistance and advice of Sir Albert Wood. The Coat of Arms, which forms the central device, is thus described by their originator :—

“ It may be described as a shield sable, with a pile or, and over all a fimbriated cross argent, bearing an inescutcheon gules on which is imprinted the Royal Arms in or. The shield is poised on an outspread map of Africa ; supporters, two negroes, one carrying a pick and the other a shovel ; crest, a coffee tree in full bearing ; motto, ‘ Light in darkness.’ Put in plain language, the shield is intended to illustrate our three colours, black, yellow, and white, with a touch of the English red. Into the sable mass of Africa I have driven a pile (wedge) of Indian yellow. Over all is the white cross, representing, in its best significations, the all-embracing white man. The inescutcheon of English red shows the Arms of the protecting Power. The motto, ‘ Light in darkness,’ was the suggestion of the late Sir Percy Anderson.”



Want of funds in 1894 compelled Sir Harry to adopt a rather cheap and inferior issue of stamps. The central device is the Coat of Arms printed all in black on a background of (except in the 1d. value, which is all black) coloured lines. A curved white band at the top contains, in letters of the same colour as the frame, "BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA," and on a coloured band appear in white letters on a ground of colour the words, "POSTAGE & REVENUE." In the values up to 1s. the value is expressed in uncoloured figures in a coloured tablet in each of the two lower angles. In the higher values, which are all of the large type, the value is expressed in words in a long coloured tablet extending across the bottom of the stamp.

The stamps were printed by Messrs. De La Rue & Co., of London, on unwatermarked paper, and perforated 14.

The stamps were first announced as issued or expected in the *Monthly Journal* for June, 1895, and the announcement is confirmed in the issue of the same journal for July, 1896. According to the *London Philatelist* (IV., 328), the £25 value had not been issued up till late in 1895.

There are eleven denominations in this set, 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., 1/-, 2/6, 3/-, 5/-, £1, £10, and £25, all of which were for the double duty of postage and revenue.

It would appear that the new stamps were limited in their use to the Protectorate proper, and that the old B.C.A. stamps were continued in use in the British South Africa Company's territory. Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. received the following letter on this subject from the British South Africa Company :—

“ 3rd December, 1895.

“ DEAR SIRS,—In reply to your letter of the 29th ultimo, the Company's stamps overprinted ‘B.C.A.’ will continue in use in the British Central Africa Protectorate until the issue has been exhausted.

“ Whether this has occurred already or not I cannot say. These stamps, however, will be used in the Company's sphere, outside the British Central Africa Protectorate, and north of the Zambesi, until the Company's new issue is made.

“ The new stamps of the British Central Africa Protectorate will only be used within the Protectorate.

“ I am, dear sirs,

“ Yours faithfully,

(Signed) “ HERBERT CANNING.  
“ *Secretary.*”

ISSUE VIII.—In reference to the issue just described, the following letter was received by Messrs. Whitfield, King & Co., in answer to one addressed by them to the Crown Agents for the Colonies :—

“ 28th November, 1895.

“ BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

“ GENTLEMEN,—In reply to your letter of the 25th November, I have to state that the new issue of stamps, postcards, and envelopes for the Protectorate of the values mentioned in our letter of the 20th June last, were manufactured by Messrs. De La Rue & Co., under the direct instructions of the Commissioner when he was in England, in the latter part of 1894, and before we became Agents for the Protectorate.

"We are not aware whether the new stamps will become a permanent issue, but we have pointed out to the Commissioner the desirability of printing stamps on watermarked paper.

"I am, gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "E. E. BLAKE."

The recommendation referred to in the above letter was duly followed by the authorities, and in or about February, 1896, the stamps described in the previous chapter began to be issued on watermarked paper. The watermark was the Crown CA design for the small sized stamps, values 1d. to 1/-, and Crown CC



CA



CC

(sideways) for the large stamps, 2/6 to £25. All the values in the previous set are repeated in the watermarked series. The colours are almost identical, except the £1, the frame colour of which was changed from orange-yellow to ultramarine, the only other notable change in shades being a deeper orange for the frame of the 4d.

The stock of unwatermarked stamps remaining in the Protectorate was destroyed after the new issue on watermarked paper had been received.



ISSUE IX.—Want of funds has been given as the reason for the tawdry designs of the 1895 issue, and a grant from the Treasury is responsible for the issue by the local authorities of a series with an improved design in 1897. The new stamps were modelled somewhat upon the same lines as their predecessors, but the central device of the Coat of Arms is on a white, shield-shaped background, which throws it into greater prominence.

The original drawings were prepared by the firm of De La Rue & Co., and were probably submitted on July 13, 1896. We illustrate the drawing in colours of the low value stamps in the accepted design, but it will be noticed that the central device has been slightly reduced in the issued stamp. Even in the issued stamp it is a trifle too large for the opening. A suggested design for the larger stamps (high values) is also illustrated, but the issued large stamps are fashioned on the same lines as the small ones. The colour scheme of the drawing, with the value TWO SHILLINGS (an

AA

July 13<sup>th</sup> 1967



Original Colour Drawing.  
(Accepted Design.)

BB

July 13<sup>th</sup> 96



Original Colour Drawing.  
(Not Accepted.)

issued denomination), is lilac for the whole of the stamp except the value tablet, which is green.

The issued stamps have the centre (Arms) in black, and a frame design in colour. A single arched band of colour at the top has the inscription BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA in white elongated sans serif lettering for the high values. The words POSTAGE & REVENUE (on either side of the shield) are in coloured sans serif and serif capitals for low and high values respectively. The value is expressed in the low values by figures of white on a tablet of colour at the base of the shield, and in the high values in words of white lettering on a coloured tablet across the bottom of the stamp.

There are no very prominent variations in shade. The ultramarine colour of the 1d. and 2/6 is found in pale and deep shades, and the yellow colour of the £10 is to be found in a pale and deep yellow.

The issue was announced in the *London Philatelist*, June, 1897 (VI., 168), and it is there stated that on the receipt of the new stamps the remainders of the previous issue were burnt by order of the authorities.

The paper is the same as before watermarked CA and CC, but the CC watermark is upright instead of sideways. The perforation is 14. The denominations were 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., 1s., 2s. 6d., 3s., 4s., £1, and £10. The 3s. stamp was withdrawn in 1899, and a 10s. stamp was added to the series in the same year. [Vide 2nd Edition, "B.C.A. Postal Guide," 1899].





ISSUE X.—In January, 1898, pending the arrival of a fresh supply of the penny value from London, the authorities had recourse to an overprinted provisional. The 3/- stamp, being now in little use owing to the introduction of an embossed revenue stamp for the collection of the hut tax, this denomination was overprinted in red with the words ONE PENNY in two lines of Roman capitals. A complete sheet of sixty appears to have been overprinted at one impression, and there is but one error to note, in which the word PENNY is mis-spelt PNNEY, this error occurring on the second stamp in the fourth row. The type in this overprint shews slight depression of the initial and final letters of the words, and the sticky red ink has resulted in freak double offsets, which result in what appears to be a double surcharge.

560 sheets, or 33,600 stamps, are said to have been overprinted, and in all probability the "PNNEY" error was corrected early in the course of printing, as it is very scarce, and was not known to collectors until some



1

Corner block, the second stamp being the error PNNEY.

years after its issue. The *British Central Africa Gazette* of November 12, 1898, states that 33,420 of the stamps were sold, leaving three sheets (180 stamps) not accounted for.

ISSUE XI.—The next provisional stamp is of particular interest owing to the unusual method of its production. The consignment of low value stamps, which was expected from London, had gone astray on the way, and the stocks of both the provisional 1d. on 3s. and the regular 1d. stamps had given out.

Under date, March 11th, 1898, the Acting Postmaster-General, Mr. J. T. Gosling, issued the following :—

#### POST OFFICE NOTICE.

“Whereas it is enacted by the Post Office Acts that the Postmaster-General should have the option of requiring the payment of postage to be made either in money, or by the use of postage stamps, and whereas Her Majesty’s Acting Commissioner and Consul-General has approved of the temporary exercise of this right of choice, Notice is Hereby given that on and from this date the public will be required to make payment in money for the postage of all correspondence addressed to places within the British Central Africa Protectorate for which penny stamps would ordinarily be used. Provided always that stamps already in the possession of any person shall be accepted in payment of postal charges, and may be affixed to letters in the ordinary way.

“During the time that this arrangement remains in force all unstamped internal correspondence, liable to a charge of one penny, should be brought to the Post Office counter, and payments made in cash.

“Postmasters will affix a token to all letters so presented as an indication that the postal charges thereon have been paid.

“These tokens are issued for the purpose of Departmental administration, and are not for sale to the public : they will be used only for internal correspondence.

“By order,  
 (Signed) “J. T. GOSLING,  
 “Acting Postmaster-General.

“GENERAL POST OFFICE, ZOMBA,  
 “March 11th, 1898.”

The circumstances which led to the exercise of the Postmaster-General's option are detailed in a circular addressed by that official to the stamp trade :—

“GENERAL POST OFFICE, ZOMBA,  
 “BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA PROTECTORATE,  
 March 23rd, 1898.

“GENTLEMEN,—

“I have the honour to transmit the following information with reference to a case of stamps of the Protectorate that has disappeared whilst *en route* from London to this place. The case was last seen at Chinde, on or about the 25th of January, when it was stowed on board a barge, in the river Zambesi.

“It afterwards disappeared, and, although it is stated to have been lost overboard, there is no satisfactory evidence that this was so.

“The stamps enclosed were of the 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., 1/-, 2/6, and 4/- issues.

“I shall be obliged if, in the event of your learning of suspiciously large transactions in B.C.A. stamps of these values, you will kindly communicate with the Crown

Agents for the Colonies, Downing Street, London, and also with me direct.

"I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. T. GOSLING,

"Acting Postmaster-General."



The tokens referred to in the Post Office Notice consisted of adhesive labels, printed in two colours, the centre consisting of the embossed penny cheque stamp in red, and the frame being composed of ordinary printer's rules, and the words INTERNAL above the red centre and POSTAGE below, the rules and INTERNAL POSTAGE inscriptions being in blue.

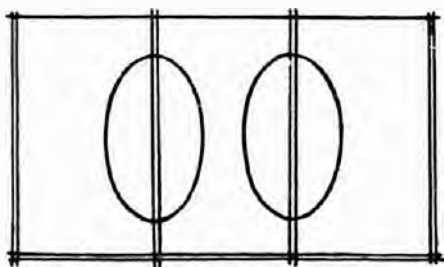
The type and rules for the frame were set up in two rows of fifteen spaces, making thirty stamps to the sheet. Mr. B. W. H. Poole, in his study of this issue (*West End Philatelist*, IV., 52) states that—

"The lines *between* the stamps, both vertically and horizontally, are double, but there is only a single line at the top of the stamps in the upper row, and at the base of the stamps in the vertical row."

This was only one setting of the frame, but we are inclined to the opinion that there were at least two settings.

The centres were embossed one at a time, the design of the embossed part consisting of a representation of the coffee tree from the Arms of the Protectorate, and the words ONE PENNY below it, and BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA PROTECTORATE extending round the sides and top.

The method of embossing the centre gave rise to a number of more or less interesting errors. We know of the stamps with centre inverted, with centre doubly embossed, with centre missing, and with two centres to three frames (the centre being struck across the vertical frame lines thus) :—



It has been said that only one sheet was printed with inverted centre. Such statements must generally be taken with some reservation, but we have every reason to believe that more than one sheet has got on the

market. A sheet of which we have had information had the top row with centre inverted, and the bottom row with centre missing.


 A handwritten signature or set of initials, appearing to be 'J.T.G.', written in a cursive, ink-like style.

At first, as a safeguard against the illicit imitation of the stamps they were initialled on the back by the Acting Postmaster-General, Mr. J. T. Gosling. The initialling appears to have been chiefly with the letters J. T. G., but sometimes J. G. alone appear. The first 16 sheets, or 480 stamps, are understood to have been initialled, after which a novel scheme of secret marking was introduced.

A set of numbers and letters was set up in ordinary type, and impressed without ink on the back of the sheet, so that each stamp got a number and a combination of letters impressed with uninked type on the back.

Mr. Poole, in his article already quoted, has reconstructed a sheet by means of the uninked impressions on the back, and we quote his notes on the matter :—

"So far as the figures are concerned, the arrangement is quite systematic, the stamps in the top row being numbered 1 to 15, from right to left, while those in the lower row are numbered 16 to 30, also from right to left. The letters that accompany the numbers appear to be quite unintelligible, though they might have had some significance to the officials at the time the stamps were issued. In some cases the figures are above the letters, in others the letters are over the

numbers ; and in four stamps on the sheet they are side by side. I have reconstructed the plate, and find the combinations of letters and figures on the thirty stamps are as follows :—

15	141	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2G	1	F
K		D	WX	Z	XA	Z	C	H	P	M	X				
30	XQ	28	27	26	25	24A	23	S	21	T	Z19	Q	E	16	FY
S	29	FA	B	J		N		22	WP	20		18	17		



"The letters and figures are not, as a rule, in line above each other, as shown in the diagram. Usually, one is to the left of the stamp, and the other to the right."

Lord Crawford has kindly shewn us a double sheet of these stamps, one sheet being printed on the top half of one side of the paper, and the other sheet on the lower half of the reverse side. The rules are identical in both sheets, and both have the uninked type impressions.

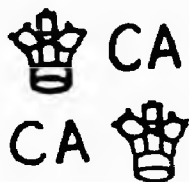
The date of the first issue of these stamps or tokens is probably March 11, 1898, the stamps being imperforate. They were later (? June) perforated, the gauge of the perforation being 12.

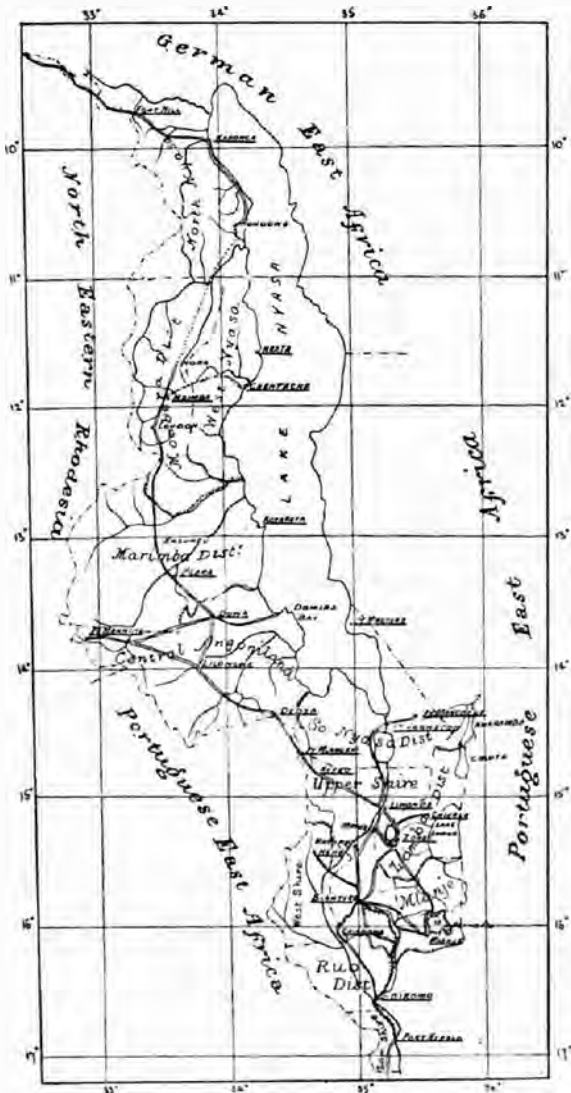
We have it on the authority of the *British Central Africa Gazette* that 23,901 of the tokens were used in accounting for the postage paid in cash at the different Post Offices in accordance with the Post Office notice quoted on page 52. In the beginning of November, 1898, a fresh supply of the regular stamps having been received, the use of the tokens was abandoned. The missing consignment of stamps ultimately turned up early in 1899, and saved the necessity of guarding against their misuse by any further overprinting or other form of provisional.

ISSUE XII.—Late in 1900 the colours of the 1d., 4d., and 6d. stamps of the regular type were changed, the centre being printed in violet in each case, the frame of the 1d. being carmine-rose, of the 4d. olive-green, and of the 6d. brown. The paper remained the same, "Crown CA," and the perforation 14.



ISSUE XIII.—A series of ten values of King's head stamps made its appearance in 1903, being chronicled in the *Monthly Circular* for September of that year. The stamps are all bicoloured, the five low values, 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., and 1/- being of the usual small size and watermarked Crown CA, the five higher values, 2/6, 4/-, 10/-, £1, and £10 being of the larger size and watermarked Crown CC. They are all perforated 14. About April, 1907, the 1d. and 6d. stamps appeared on the new surfaced paper watermarked Multiple Crown CA.





Map of Nyasaland Protectorate.



## CHAPTER IV.

### Nyasaland Protectorate Issue.



#### ISSUE XIV.

**B**Y an Order in Council of July 6, 1907, published in the *London Gazette*, September 3, 1907, the designation of the territory previously known as the British Central Africa Protectorate was changed to that of Nyasaland Protectorate, and a new Constitution was established and came into force on

October 21, 1907. The change of name led to a change of stamps, and a new series commenced to make its appearance about July, 1908. It is a King's head series, but of the more ornate pattern recently adopted for the De La Rue printings of various Colonial Stamps, and bears the new title of the territory "Nyasaland Protectorate." The values are,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 1/-, 2/6, 4/-, 10/-, £1, and £10. The 1/- is on single Crown CA paper, the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. on unsurfaced Multiple CA paper, and all the rest are on surfaced Multiple CA paper, perforated 14. The 4d. is recorded with inverted watermark. The earliest known postmark is Zomba, July 20.

The stamps of the values  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1/- are printed in sheets of 120 in two panes of 60 stamps each (ten rows of six), the high values, 2/6 to £10, in sheets of sixty in five rows of twelve stamps.





## CHAPTER V. Postmarks.

THERE is considerable confusion over the cancelling marks seen on the stamps under review in this handbook. There can be little doubt also that the cancellations intended for postal purposes and those intended for fiscal use were at times used indiscriminately, and this has given rise to the supposition that some of the long fiscal stamps overprinted B.C.A. on the British South Africa company's issues were used postally. We quote some correspondence on this point from which it is clear that where (as doubtless was the case in several districts) the Postmaster and Revenue Officer was one and the same individual, it was an easy mistake to use the tax cancellation in lieu of the postal one, and *vice versa*.

The first two letters were addressed to Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. by the Postmaster-General.

Nov. 13th, 1896.

"SIRS:—I have the honour to inform you, in reply to your inquiry of yesterday, that none of the Revenue stamps of British Central Africa were ever used postally.

"The one you sent me has been taken off an expired license, and has been improperly obliterated.

"There is a special stamp issued to cancel Revenue stamps, and in addition Revenue officers are instructed to write the date across the stamp.

"In the case in question the Revenue officer at Port Herald is also Postmaster, and the mistake has thus arisen.

"I return the stamp sent for me to see.

"I have the honour to be, sirs,

"Your obedient Servant,

"(Signed) J. E. MCMASTER,

"*Postmaster-General, B.C.A.*"

BRUSSELS,

*December 19th, 1896.*

"SIRS :—I have the honour to enclose for your perusal a letter from the Postmaster of Port Herald, B.C. Africa, with reference to the Revenue stamps of that Protectorate.

"You will note that the said Revenue stamps were never used postally, and that the cancellation with the postal postmark was, as I expected, a mistake on the part of the Postmaster, who, as collector of Revenue of the same district, was supplied with two sets of obliterators, one for postal and one for the Revenue purposes, and in error used the postal obliteration for the Revenue purposes.

"I have the honour to be, sirs,

"Your obedient servant,

"(Signed) J. E. MCMASTER,

"*Postmaster-General, B.C.A.*"

*Copy of letter from Postmaster of Port Herald enclosed in above :—*

SURBITON,

*December 18th, 1896.*

"SIR :—In reply to your letter of the 14th inst., I have the honour to inform you that those long Revenue stamps you mention were never used postally, and the reason the date-stamp appears on them was that, having a large number of the papers to issue one day, it saved time, as it did away with the necessity of writing in the date in ink on the tax stamps.

"I have the honour to be, sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"(Signed) H. GALT,

*Postmaster, Port Herald.*

The Postmaster-General,  
B.C. Africa.

The usual hut tax cancellation appears to have consisted of a large circle with the words British Central Africa within, conforming to the circumference of the circle, and the town name either across the centre or at the bottom between the beginning of "BRITISH" and the end of "AFRICA." This cancellation is found both dated and undated in black, in violet, and in light blue. In some cases the date is in the type, and in some cases, is written in after the cancelling stamp has been impressed. The cancellations of this class that have come under our notice have emanated from the following places :—

Buo, Blantyre, Milanui, Zomba, Deep Bay, West Shire, Johnston, Karonga, Port Herald.

A similar large circular mark is inscribed "Her Britannic Majesty's Consular Court Blantyre. Director of Customs—[Date]—British Central Africa." This, of course, is not a postal cancellation.

The small size marks which may be taken generally to be the postal obliterations are in a variety of forms—oval, circular, and the familiar "squared circle" type. There are small, oval-shaped marks composed of thick lines with the centre broken by a rectangular piercing containing numerals, of which we have seen or had reported numbers 563, 833, 852, 854, 855, 860, 863, 871, 872, and (?) 903. As these numeral marks are mostly on the old British South Africa Company's stamps overprinted B.C.A., we approached the Secretary as to whether there was any key to the use of these numeral cancellations, but no such key is known.





## CHAPTER VI.

### Proofs, Colour Trials, etc.

**F**OR the assistance of collectors adding proofs to their collections we append a list of proofs and colour trials we have noted.

Issue VII.—1d. Imperforate proof in pale grey-black, mounted on card.

Issue IX.—1d. The original colour drawing (illustrated on page 47) is in green (frame) and yellow-green (arms). The value tablet is in ultramarine.

- 1d. Colour trials : olive-green and grey-green.
- "                  grey-green and grey-black.
- "                  green and deep black.
- "                  bistre-brown and grey-green.
- "                  bistre-brown and grey-black.
- "                  orange-yellow and black.
- "                  carmine-rose and black.
- "                  lilac and grey-black.

1d. Imperforate proof in accepted colours.

2d. Imperforate proof in accepted colours.

2s. Essay. Colour drawing (see page 48) in lilac (frame and centre) and green (value tablet).

2s. 6d. Colour trial : olive-brown and grey-black.  
 " violet and black.

10s. Colour trial : yellow-green and grey-black.

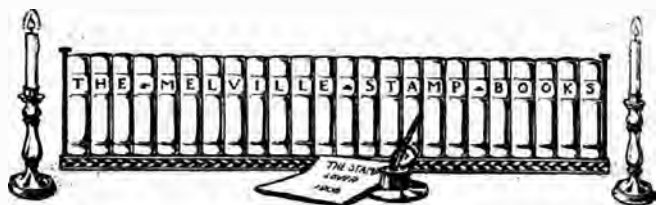
Issue XIII.—Colour trials on single CA paper.  
 Imperforate. Frame in first colour.

1d. grey black and grey black, orange and mauve,  
 grey green and mauve, blue and grey, grey black and  
 mauve, purple and mauve, pale brown and grey, brown  
 and carmine, mauve and deep brown, carmine and  
 carmine, stone and purple, sage green and blue green,  
 brown and purple, green and purple, mauve and green,  
 brown and green, carmine and brown, green and  
 brown, stone and carmine.

2s. 6d. (single CA paper) orange and green, green  
 and brown, carmine and green, brown and purple,  
 brown and green, black and dull purple, carmine and  
 black, bright violet and dull purple, carmine and dull  
 purple, lilac and dull purple, bright green and dull  
 purple, black and black, ultramarine and black, sage  
 green and purple, stone and purple, purple and green,  
 green and carmine, orange and purple.

We have seen copies overprinted "Specimen" of  
 issues VII., VIII., IX., XII., and XIII., and they are  
 probably to be obtained of all the regular issues.





## CHAPTER VII.

### Bibliography.

**T**HE references to the stamps of British Central Africa in philatelic literature are not very numerous, and are, for the most part, simple chronicles of the issues as received by collectors. The issues up to 1895 are dealt with in the Royal Society's *Africa, Part I.*

INDEX TO THE CHIEF PRINTED ARTICLES AND PAPERS IN PHILATELIC BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.

G.S.W.—Gibbons' Stamp Weekly.

L.P.—London Philatelist.

M.P.J.—Morley's Philatelic Journal.

P.J.G.B.—Philatelic Journal of Great Britain.

P.S.—Postage Stamp.

S.C.F.—Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly.

S.G.M.J.—Stanley Gibbons' Monthly Journal.

W.E.P.—West End Philatelist.

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GENERAL. "The Postage Stamps . . . of the British Colonies, Possessions, and Protectorates in Africa." Part I., pages 27-34. Compiled and published by the Philatelic Society, London, 1895. \* \* \* Plates.

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[Nankivell], G.S.W., III., 129 ; P.S., II., 267,  
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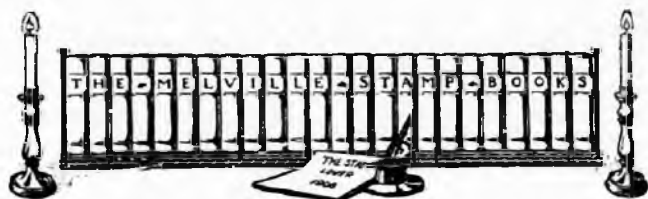
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REVENUE STAMPS [Langlois], M.P.J., I., 23.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### Check List.

*Stamps of the British South Africa Company overprinted B.C.A. in black by Messrs. Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co., Ltd., London. Value in second colour. Perforated 14.*

Issue I. *April, 1891.*

1d black.

2d sea-green and vermilion (shades).

4d red-brown and black (shades).

6d ultramarine (shades).

6d deep blue.

8d rose-lake and blue (shades).

1s brown.

2s vermilion.

2s 6d pale lilac.

5s orange-yellow (shades).

10s deep green.

£1 deep blue.

£2 rose-red.

£5 sage-green.

£10 brown.

*Varieties.* All values up to 10s in this and the following issues (I.-VI.) may be found with :—

Thick letters B.C.A.

Thin letters        "

Stop varieties.

Issue II. *August, 1892. Additional overprint in black.*

"FOUR SHILLINGS" on 5s orange-yellow.

Issue III. *February, 1893.*

4s slate and vermilion.

Issue IV. *October, 1893. Additional overprint in black.*

"THREE SHILLINGS" on 4s. slate and vermilion.

Issue V. *October, 1895.*

3s light brown and green.

Issue VI. 1895. *Conversion of the 2d stamp of Issue I. for service as 1d denomination.*

2d sea-green and vermilion, bisected diagonally for use as 1d.

*Additional overprint in black.*

"ONE PENNY." on 2d. Stop after

"PENNY." (Printed at Cape Town.)

*Varieties.*

Double overprint.

Initial or final letters out of alignment.

Double overprint without stop after

"PENNY" (the Blantyre setting).

*Issues of the British Central Africa Protectorate. Printed by Messrs. De La Rue & Co., Ltd., in London.*

Issue VII. 1895. *No watermark. Perforated 14. Arms in second colour.*

1d black	(small type).
2d green and black	..
4d buff-brown and black	..
6d ultramarine and black	..
1s carmine and black	..
2s 6d mauve and black	(large type).
3s yellow and black	..
5s olive and black	..
£1 orange and black	..
£10 vermilion and black	..
£25 blue-green and black	..

Issue VIII. February, 1896. *Watermarked Crown CA. Perforated 14. Arms in second colour.*

1d black	(small type).
2d green and black	..
4d orange-brown and black	..
6d ultramarine and black	..
1s rose and black	..

*Watermarked Crown CC sideways. Perforated 14. Arms in second colour.*

2s 6d mauve and black	(large type).
3s yellow and black	..
5s olive and black	..
£1 bright blue and black	..
£10 vermilion and black	..
£25 green and black	..

Issue IX. 1897. *Arms type re-drawn. Watermarked Crown CA. Perforated 14. Frame in colour. Arms in black.*

1d ultramarine.

2d yellow.

4d carmine.

6d sea-green.

1s lilac.

*Watermarked Crown CC. Perforated 14. Frame in colour. Arms in black.*

2s 6d ultramarine.

3s sea-green.

4s carmine.

10s olive-green [1899].

£1 lilac.

£10 yellow.



Issue X. *January, 1898. 3s. stamp of Issue IX. overprinted in red.*

"ONE PENNY" on 3s, sea-green and black.

*Error.*

"ONE PNNEY" for "ONE PENNY"

Issue XI. *March 11, 1898. Printed and embossed locally. Imperforate. Frame in blue. Centre in red.*

1d red and blue (shades).

*Varieties.*

Initialed on back J.T.G. or J.G.

Uninked type impressions on back.

Centre inverted.

Centre doubly embossed.

Centre missing.

Two centres across three frames.

Embossing die broken.

*The same but perforated 12.*

1d red and blue (shades).

*Varieties.*

Uninked type impressions on back.

Embossing die broken.

*Regular Issue in New Colours.*

Issue XII. 1900. *Watermarked Crown CA.*  
*Perforated 14. Arms in second colour.*

1d carmine-rose and lilac.

4d olive-green and lilac.

6d brown and lilac.

*King's Head Series. Printed in London by*  
*Messrs. De la Rue & Co., Ltd.*

Issue XIII. 1903-4. *Watermarked Crown CA.*  
*Perforated 14. Centre in second colour.*

1d carmine and grey-black.

2d purple and magenta.

4d black and slate-green.

6d buff-brown and grey-black.

1s blue and grey-black.

*Varieties.*

1d, watermarked, Multiple Crown CA  
 1907.

6d           "           "           "

*Watermarked Crown CC. Perforated 14. Centre*  
*in second colour.*

2s 6d green and slate-green.

4s mauve and lilac.

10s black and slate-green.

£1 carmine and grey-black.

£10 blue and grey-black.

*Issue for the newly designated "Nyasaland Protectorate." Printed in London by Messrs. De la Rue & Co., Ltd.*

Issue XIV. 1908. *Watermarked Crown CA (various papers). Perforated 14.*

½d green (multiple wmk., ordinary paper).

1d carmine " "

3d purple on yellow paper (multiple wmk., surfaced paper).

4d carmine and black on yellow paper (multiple wmk., surfaced paper).

1s black on green paper (single CA, surfaced paper).

*Watermarked Multiple Crown CA. Perforated 14.*

2s 6d carmine and black.

4s black and carmine.

10s red and green on green paper.

£1 black and purple on red paper.





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	4s on 5s,	7	6	8	0	£1 blue,	75	6	65	0	
1895,	1d on 2d,	2	6	3	6	1897,	1d,	0	2	0	1½
	1d on 2d, double,	75	0	—	—	2d yellow,	0	4½	0	3	
1895,	No wmk., perf. 14.					4d carmine,	0	9	0	9	
	1d black,	1	0	1	0	6d green,	1	2	1	0	
	2d green,	2	6	2	0	1s lilac,	1	6	1	6	
	4d brown,	3	0	2	6	2s 6d blue,	4	0	—	—	
	6d blue,	3	0	1	6	3s green,	25	0	—	—	
	1s carmine,	8	0	7	6	4s carmine,	6	0	—	—	
	2s 6d mauve.	21	0	18	6	10s green,	16	0	—	—	
	3s yellow,	14	0	5	6	£1 lilac,	28	0	11	0	
	5s olive,	24	0	15	0	£10 yellow,					
	£1 orange,	80	0	32	6	black can- cellation,	£12		47	6	
	£10 vermilion,			£7	10s	1898,	1d red and blue, imperf.	80	0	2	6
	£25 green,			£17	10s.	1d red and blue, perf.,	—		1	8	
Feb., 1896.	C.A.					1d error, in- verted centre,	£50		—	—	
	1d black,	0	4½	0	4	1900,	1d carmine,	0	3	0	1½
	2d green,	1	3	1	3	4d olive- green,	1	0	0	9	
	4d brown,	2	6	2	4	6d brown,	1	0	0	9	
	6d blue,	2	0	2	0	1903-4.	Single C.A.				
	1s rose,	6	3	3	0	Set 1d to 1s,	3	0	—	—	
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