

King George VI – New Zealand The Half Penny Issues & Postal Rates

A Study Paper

Section 2 - Half Penny Stamps



by

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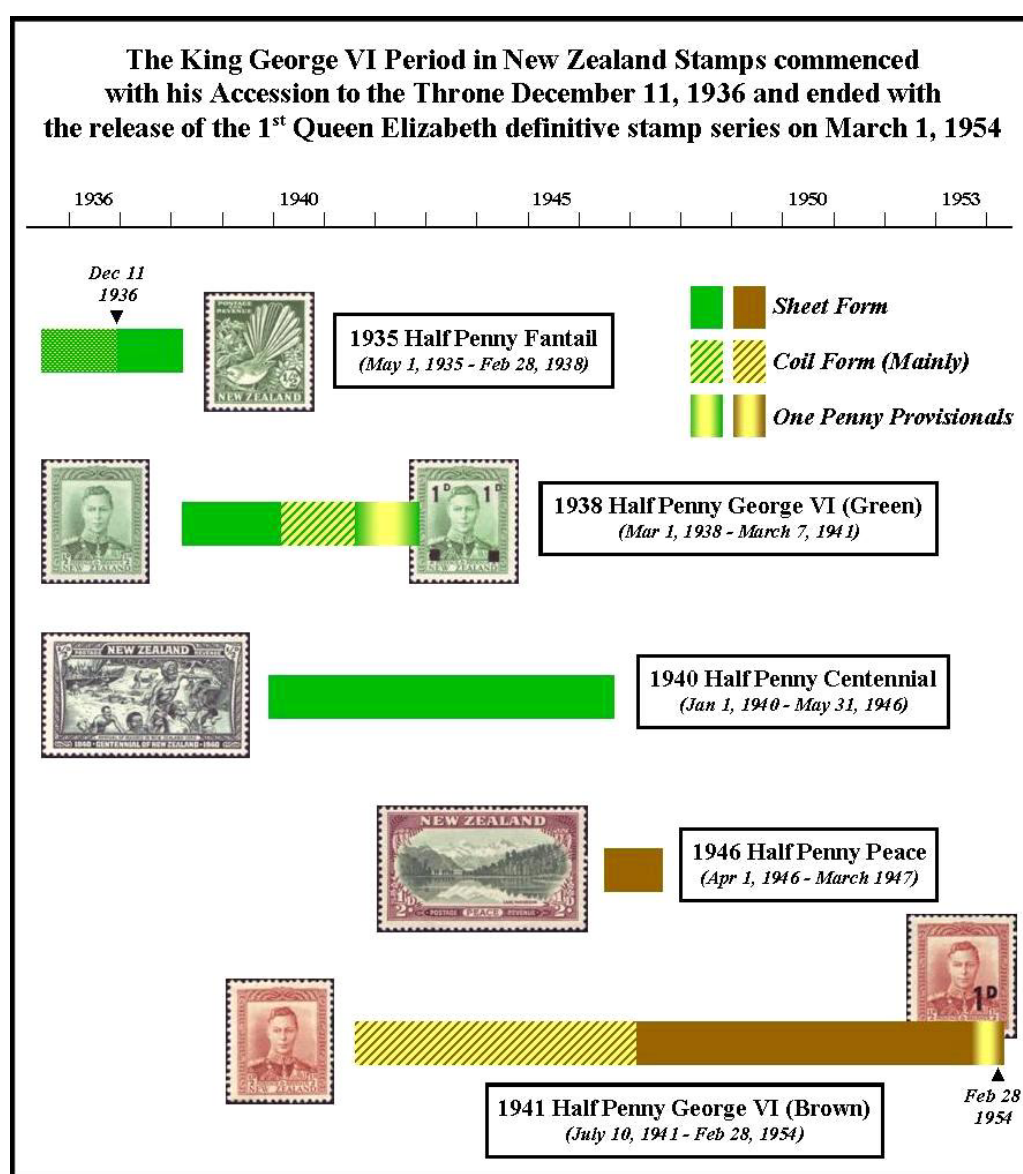
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Section 2 Half Penny Stamps

There were five half penny stamps available for general postal purposes during the George VI Period, namely the 1935 Pictorial Issue Half Penny “Fantail”, the 1938 Half Penny George VI “Green”, the 1940 Half Penny Centennial Issue “Maori Landing”, 1941 Half Penny George VI “Brown” and the 1946 Half Penny Peace Issue “Lake Matheson”. The respective periods of issue of these stamps are illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. Surplus stocks of the 1938 Half Penny Green and the 1941 Half Penny Brown were overprinted for re-issue as one penny stamps in 1941 and 1953 respectively.

Figure 2.1 Half Penny Stamps Periods of Issue during the George VI Period



2.1 Half Penny Stamps on Issue - December 11, 1936

The 1935 Pictorials were released for general postal purposes on May 1, 1935 replacing the King George V definitive stamps. A review of information contained in **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume I** did not reveal whether the KGV definitives were withdrawn on that date but it can be assumed on December 11, 1936, the only half penny stamp available for general postage use at post offices throughout New Zealand would have been the green half penny “Fantail” of the 1935 Pictorial Issue.

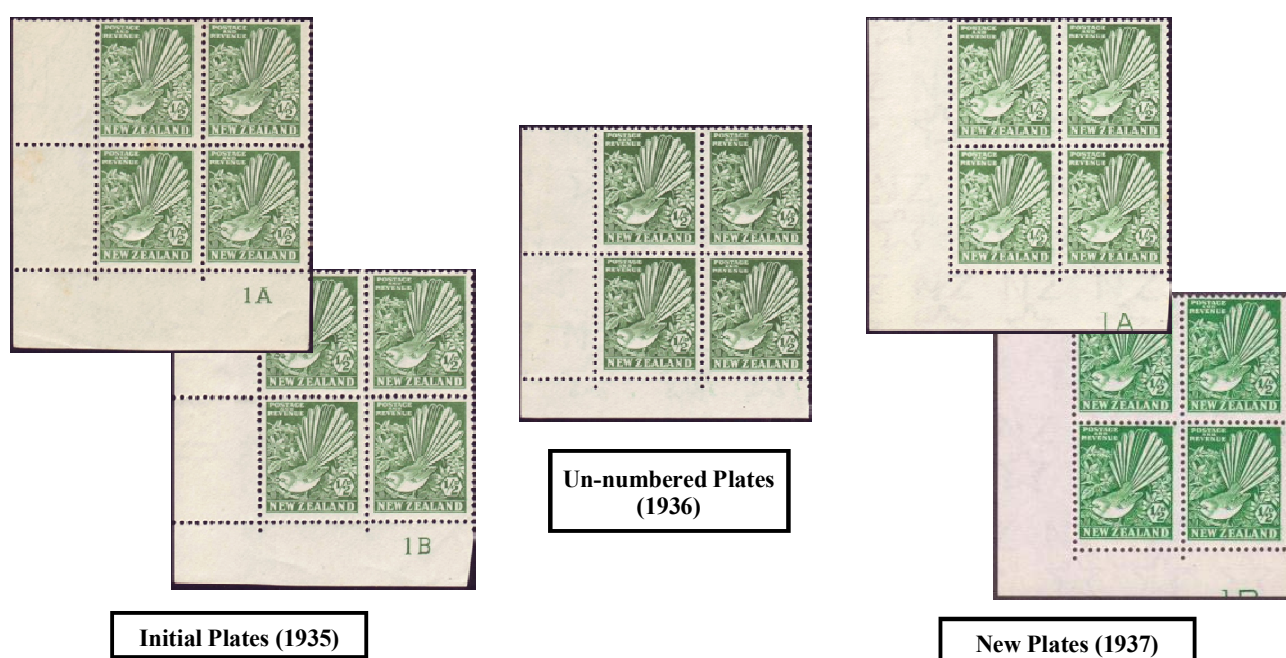
Two half penny commemorative stamps were issued in 1936, one in April - the ANZAC Issue and in October 1936, the Chamber of Commerce Issue. However surplus stocks of these stamps had been withdrawn from sale at post offices prior to December 11, 1936 ⁽¹⁾. Use of these stamps to pay postage continued to be valid well into the George VI Period and examples of covers with these stamps affixed presumably came from stocks held by the general public.

2.2 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” (December 11, 1936 - February 28, 1938)

The Initial Plates used to produce the 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” stamp were identified by the inscription “1A” & “1B” found in the lower left hand selvedge under column two of the panes of half penny stamps. The initial printings were issued on Registered or Single NZ and Star water-marked paper on May 1, 1935. The Initial Plates 1A and 1B were also used for the early printings of the of the ½d. Fantail on Multiple NZ and Star watermarked issued March 20, 1936.

New un-numbered Plates of the ½d. Fantail were laid down in early 1936 and used with Initial Plates 1A and 1B on a larger printing machine. Printings of ½d. Fantail stamps issued in October 1937 were from new Plates “1A” & “1B” which can be distinguished by larger lettering than that found on the Initial 1A and 1B Plates. The inscription on the new Plates 1A and 1B were set lower in the selvedge and were usually partially guillotined in the sheet production process. All printings of the ½d. Fantail were performed by De La Rue & Co. Ltd. who did not insert a printer’s inscription in the selvedge as was their custom.

Figure 2.2 1935 Half Penny Fantail Plate Blocks



2.2 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” (December 11, 1936 - February 28, 1938 cont’d)

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, the ½d. Fantail is thought to have been the only postage stamp available at New Zealand post office counters during the first fourteen months of the George VI Period. Surplus stocks of the ½d. Fantail were withdrawn from post offices with the introduction of the King George Half Penny Green on March 1, 1938.

The ½d. Fantail was issued in Official form in the period commencing July 1937 to February 28, 1938 from the 1936 Un-numbered Plate ⁽²⁾. The word “Official”, referred to as Type O3 by Campbell Paterson ⁽³⁾, appeared in italic type with the two f’s joined at the top and cross bars as illustrated below. The issue date of July 1937 indicates that various Government departments continued to use King George V Half Penny Green official stamps during the first eight months of the George VI Period.



It is reported that the ½d. Fantail was issued in coil form for vending machines on both “Single” and “Multiple” watermarked paper ⁽⁴⁾. It is also thought that coil rolls of the ½d. Fantail was also used in Lighting Affixing Machines ⁽⁴⁾. However, the ½d. Fantail was not issued in booklet form.

The ½d. Fantail is known to exist with inverted watermarks for both the “Registered” (or “Single”) and the “Multiple” Star and NZ watermarked papers.

Further information relating to the production and other aspects of the ½d. Fantail stamp is available from a variety of published sources ^(2, 5, & 6). A comprehensive article by Savins ⁽⁷⁾ on the comb perforations of the ½d. Fantail and other 1935 Pictorials has recently been published in *The New Zealand Stamp Collector*.

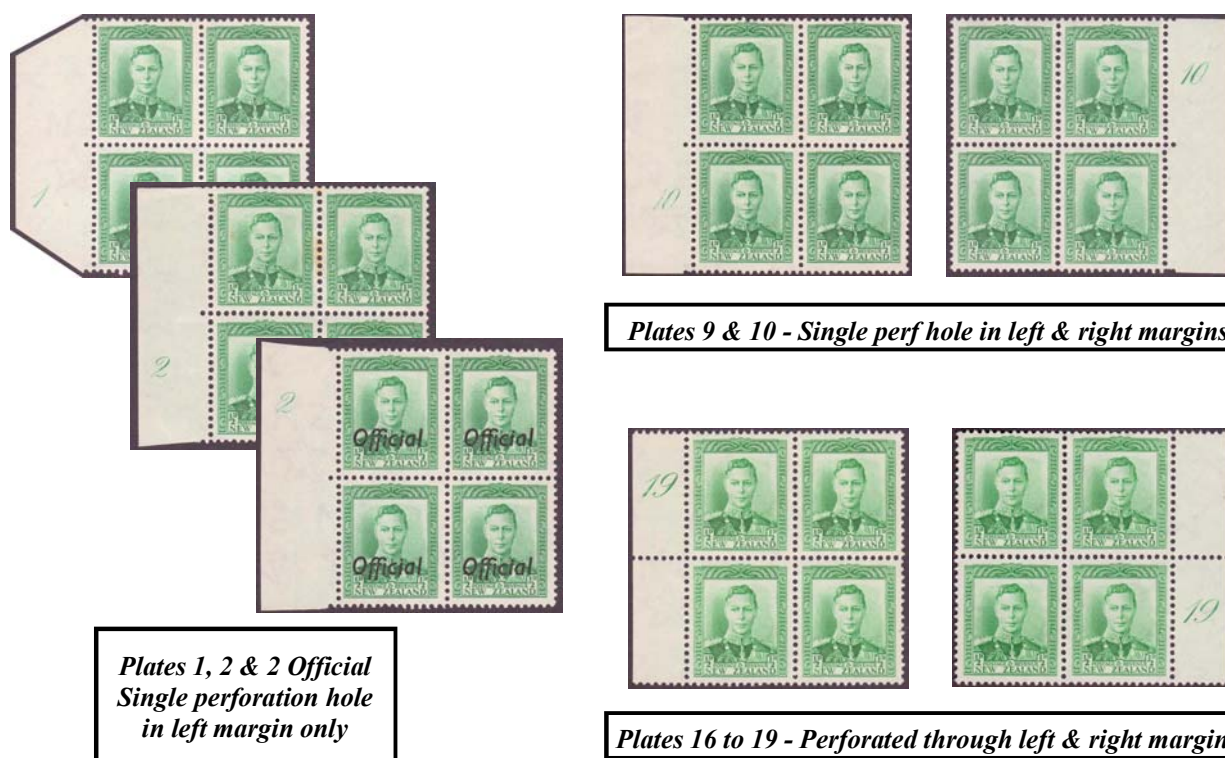
2.3 The 1938 Half Penny George VI “Green” (March 1, 1938 -March 7, 1941)

The 1938 Half Penny George VI “Green” stamps issued on March 1, 1938 were produced from Plates 1 & 2. Thereafter the ½d. GVI Green stamps issued in April 1938 were produced from Plates 9 & 10 while those issued in July 1938 were from Plates 16, 17, 18 & 19. Panes of ½d. GVI Green stamps from Plate 2 were overprinted for Official use (CP Type O3) and also issued on March 1, 1938. The existence of one plate block of Plate No. 1 Official has been reported - a George VI Period rarity^(8,9) although the provenance of this example is uncertain.

All ½d. GVI Green plates had the plate numbers printed in the side selvedge margins opposite the fourth row of stamps. In the case of Plates 1 & 2, the plate numbers only appear in the left hand selvedge. For the balance, plate numbers appear in both margins. Stamps produced from Plates 16 through 19 had slightly wider spacings across the horizontal rows to accommodate the production of vending machine coils. This change resulted in a variation of the perforation in the selvedge of the sheets produced from these plates as is illustrated below.

The inscription of the printer, Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. LD., appears under columns 11 through 14 on the lower selvedge as shown in the imprint block illustrated on the title page of this Study Paper.

Figure 2.4 1938 Half Penny George VI Plate Blocks



The change in postal rates on October 1, 1939 and the introduction of the 1940 Half Penny Centennial in January 1940 greatly reduced the requirements for the ½d. GVI Green stamp. Surplus stocks of these stamps were withdrawn from sale at post offices across New Zealand in early March 1941 and overprinted 1d⁽¹⁰⁾. Effectively then, the period when ½d. GVI Green was the sole half penny stamp was about 22 months between March 1938 to January 1940. However the ½d. GVI Green continued to be issued in coil form until mid 1941 when it was replaced by the 1941 ½d. GVI Brown issued July 10, 1941.

2.3 The 1938 Half Penny George VI “Green” (March 1, 1938 - March 7, 1941 cont’d)

The ½d. GVI Green was issued in coil form for use in vending machines ⁽¹¹⁾. No counter coils of the ½d. GVI Green were produced.

The ½d. GVI Green was issued in booklet form in late 1938. The 2s. booklet contained two panes of six stamps of the ½d. GVI Green and three panes of the 1938 1d. GVI Red. Two versions of this booklet were released one in November and the second in December 1938. The November 1938 version had advertisements largely printed in red ink while in the December version, advertisements were printed in black. The ½d. GVI Green booklet stamps were prepared from Plate 22, a special purpose plate which resulted in the booklet panes having both upright and inverted watermarks ⁽¹²⁾.

The ½d. GVI Green is only known to exist with inverted watermarks from booklet panes.

Further information relating to the production and other aspects of the ½d. GVI Green is available from published sources ^(12, 13 & 14).

2.4 The 1940 Half Penny Centennial (January 2, 1940 - May 31, 1946)

The 1940 Half Penny Centennial stamp was issued on January 2, 1940 in sheets produced from four plates numbered 1T, 1L, 2T & 2L each containing 10 horizontal rows of 12 stamps. The inscription of the printer, Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. LD., and the plate number and letter appear under columns 6 and 7 on the lower selvedge.

Panes of the ½d. Centennial stamps from Plates 1L, 2T & 2L were overprinted in red ink for official purposes using a revised stereo type where the word “Official”, referred to as Type O4 by Campbell Paterson ⁽³⁾, appeared in italic type with the top and cross bars of the two f’s separated by a space as illustrated in Fig 2.6 overleaf.

One important overprint variety (known as the Joined “ff” variety), occurred on stamp 10 of Row 1 of some later printings when a single stereo of CP Type O3 was incorporated in the field of 120 (otherwise CP Type O4) overprinting stereos. Positional blocks of the ½d. Centennial stamp exist with and without the Joined “ff” variety.

Originally intended to be withdrawn from sale at the end of 1940, the ½d. Centennial, along with other stamps among the 1940 Centennial Issue remained available at post offices well into the mid 1940’s as a war conservation measure. Surplus stocks of the ½d. Centennial were withdrawn from sale May 31, 1946 and destroyed ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Further information relating to the production and other aspects of the ½d. Centennial is available from published sources ^(16 & 17).



**Figure 2.5 1940 Half Penny Centennial Plate Blocks
1L (regular issue) &
1T Official issue**

2.4 The 1940 Half Penny Centennial (January 2, 1940 - May 31, 1946 cont'd)



Fig 2.6 Half Penny Centennial with the Joined “ff” Official Overprint Type O3 (Row 1/10) & the Normal Official Overprint Type O4 (Row 2/10)

2.5 The 1941 Half Penny George VI “Brown” (July 10, 1941 - February 28, 1954)

The 1941 Half Penny George VI “Brown” stamps first appeared July 10, 1941. At first this stamp was generally dedicated for use in vending machines as sufficient stocks of the 1940 Half Penny Centennial were available to meet over the counter requirements for half penny stamps at post offices throughout New Zealand. Notwithstanding, the stamp was made available in sheet form for the convenience of collectors and dealers from the Stamps Branch G.P.O., Wellington and first day covers bearing sheet as well as coil stamps are known. This practice continued into the first half of 1947. The ½d. GVI Brown was only generally issued in sheet form to post offices following the exhaustion of supplies of the Half Penny Peace Issue in March 1947.

The change in postal rates on July 16, 1950 relegated the use of half penny stamps to selected overweight categories or in combination to make up a rate, for example, to make up the new 1½d. Inland Commercial papers rate that came into effect in July 1950.

Eight plates were used over the current life of the ½d. GVI Brown. These stamps were printed on four different papers and these are listed on Table 2.1 overleaf. While the ½d. GVI Brown stamps from sheets printed from Plate No. 38 are recorded as being issued in 1946, it is likely that these stamps were in fact produced in 1941 and only issued from stock some years later once they were required. Sheet stamps from Plate 101 are known to exist with both Fine and Coarse Vertical Mesh papers.

2.5 The 1941 Half Penny George VI “Brown” (July 10, 1941 - February 28, 1954 cont’d)

Table 2.1 1941 Half Penny George VI Brown - Papers Plates & Dates of Issue		
Issue Date	Plate Nos.	Papers
July 10, 1941	17, 18 & 19	Fine HM (Horizontal Mesh) Paper - Wiggins-Teape; 70% Esparto
Late 1941	38 (Vending Coils)	Fine VM (Vertical Mesh) Paper - Wiggins-Teape; 45% Esparto
May 1946	38 (Sheet form)	Fine VM (Vertical Mesh) Paper - Wiggins-Teape; 45% Esparto
September 1947	100, 101	St. Cuthbert’s Mills “Royal Cypher” Fine VM Paper
March 1949	101, 111	Coarse VM Paper
December 4, 1950	133	Coarse VM Paper

Plates Nos. 17, 18 & 19 had been used for later printings of the ½d. GVI Green and had the plate numbers recorded in the left and right hand selvedge with the printer’s imprint under rows 11 to 14 along the bottom selvedge. Following a change in policy in 1941, the plate numbers were inserted below the printer’s inscription commencing with Plate 38 in the case of the ½d. GVI Brown. Subsequent plates had the printer’s inscription in the lower left hand corner of (Plate Nos. 100, 101, 111) or the lower right hand corner of the bottom selvedge (Plate No. 133).

The printer’s inscription on Plate 133 differs from the others in that the word “England” is dropped from the inscription text.

Figure 2.7 1941 Half Penny George VI “Brown” Plate Blocks



The ½d. GVI Brown was issued in coil form for use in vending machines⁽¹⁸⁾. No counter coils of the ½d. GVI Brown were produced. The ½d. GVI Brown was not issued in booklet form.



**Fig 2.8 Half Penny
Coil Leader
for Vending Machines
960 Stamps - Value £2
Dated
October 19, 1943**

The ½d. GVI Brown is known to exist with inverted (multiple star & NZ) watermarks from later printings⁽¹⁹⁾. Further information relating to the production and other aspects of the ½d. GVI Brown is available from published sources^(19 & 20).

2.6 The 1946 Half Penny Peace Issue (April 1, 1946 - March 1947)

The 1946 Half Penny Peace Issue stamp was issued on April 1, 1946. Bulk stocks of the ½d. Peace stamp were exhausted in March 1947 at which time the ½d. GVI Brown then remained the only half penny stamp available for general postal purposes from post offices in New Zealand.

The ½d. Peace stamp was issued in sheets of 120 stamps comprising 15 rows of 8 stamps. One centre plate, numbered 42724 by the printer Waterlow & Sons Limited, and two frame plates, 42725 and 42790, were used to produce this stamp. These plate numbers were trimmed from the final sheets as issued leaving only the Waterlow & Sons inscription which appears under columns 4 and 5 on the lower selvedge. The stamp is known to exist in two papers, one a smooth paper by St. Cuthbert's Mill and, the second, a noticeably coarse grained paper made by Wiggins, Teape & Co. The sheets were perforated from both the top and bottom creating a readily noticeable difference in the appearance of the inscription blocks.

Figure 2.9 1946 Half Penny Peace Issue Inscription Blocks



Considerable study has been conducted on plate printing varieties that occur with this stamp. **The Postage Stamps of Zealand - Volume II** contains considerable information in this regard and very detailed studies on varieties by Lockyear ⁽²¹⁾ and Hancox ⁽²²⁾ have appeared in **GEOSIX** and **The New Zealand Stamp Collector** respectively in recent times.

The ½d. Peace stamp is only known to exist with upright (multiple star & NZ) watermark papers.

Further information relating to the production and other aspects of the ½d. Peace stamp is available from published sources ^(23 & 24).

2.7 The Half Penny Stamp Issues in the Early 1940's

When considering a number of factors as they pertain to the use of half penny stamps in this period, there is circumstantial evidence to suggest the Post & Telegraph Department brought in the October 1, 1939 rates changes on very short notice. This is evidenced by a) the fact that the 1940 ½d. Centennial stamp was produced in such massive quantities (as compared to requirements) that stocks were still not fully exhausted some six years after first issue, not the customary one year originally planned for this commemorative issue and b) substantial quantities of the ½d. GVI Green were overprinted for use as a 1d. Provisional in 1941. Some fascinating postal history outcomes flow from these circumstances, a subject more fully explored in Sections 4 and 5 of this Study Paper.

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