

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

*A Study Paper*

## **Section 3 Half Penny Postal Stationery**



*by*

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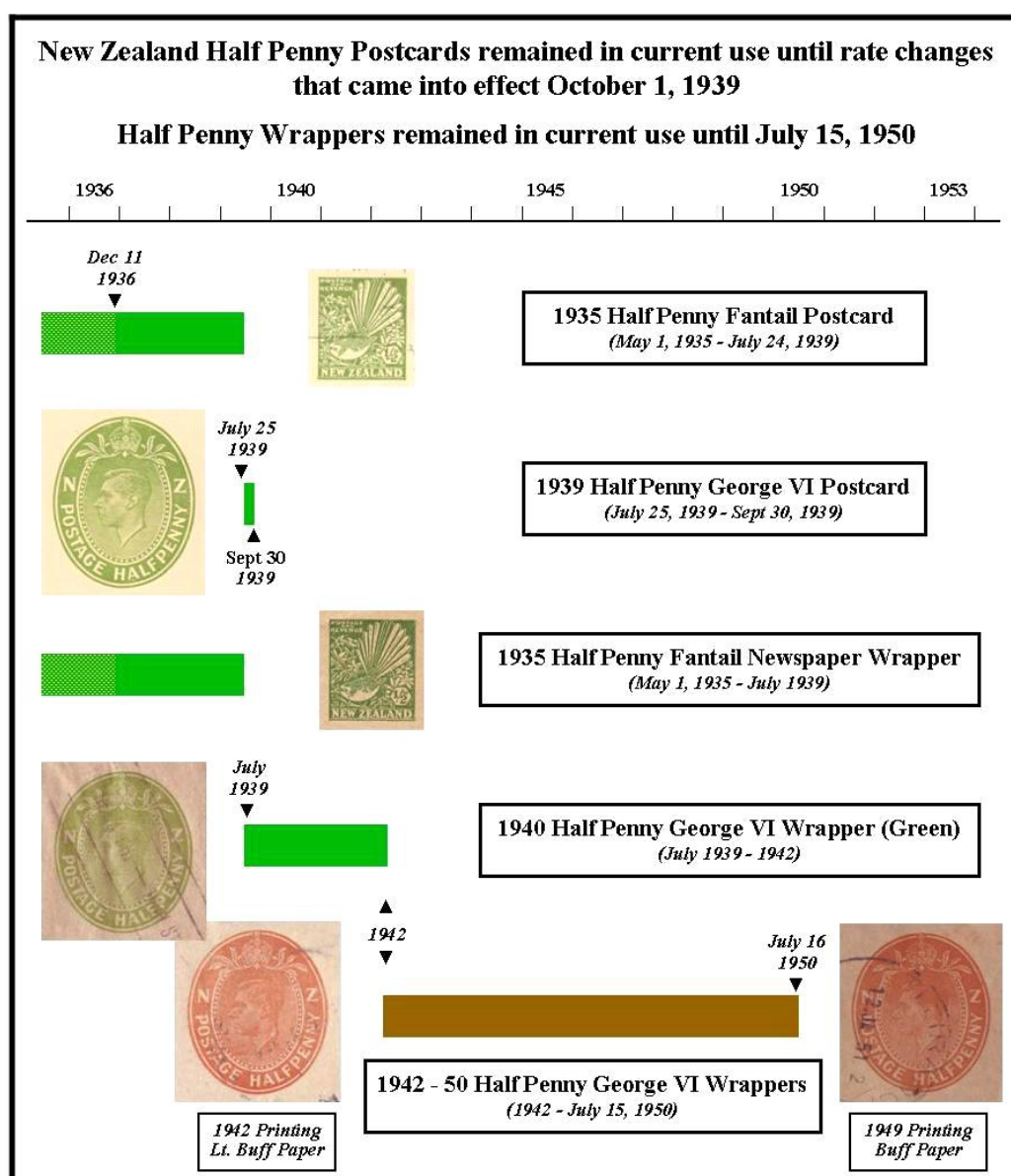
### **Section 3    Half Penny Postal Stationery**

The Post & Telegraph Department issued two categories of half penny denominated postal stationery during the George VI Period for general postal purposes, namely Postcards and Wrappers. A third category of half penny postal stationery, Printed to Private Order Envelopes, was also issued in the George VI Period (see Section 7.1 of this Study Paper).

At the start of the period, December 11, 1936, postal stationery Half Penny Postcards and Wrappers featured the “Fantail” image of the 1935 Pictorial stamp issue printed in green. These were replaced by Half Penny Postcards and Wrappers bearing the image of King George VI in July 1939, also printed in green. A colour change came into effect in 1942 with the issue of the Half Penny George VI Wrapper in brown. The respective periods of issue of these postal stationery items are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

Information used to compile this Section 3. is largely drawn from **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX**; namely for Postcards <sup>(1)</sup>; Official Postcards <sup>(2)</sup>; and Wrappers <sup>(3)</sup>.

**Figure 3.1    Half Penny Postal Stationery Periods of Issue during the George VI Period**



### **3.1 Half Penny Postal Stationery Postcard on Issue - December 11, 1936**

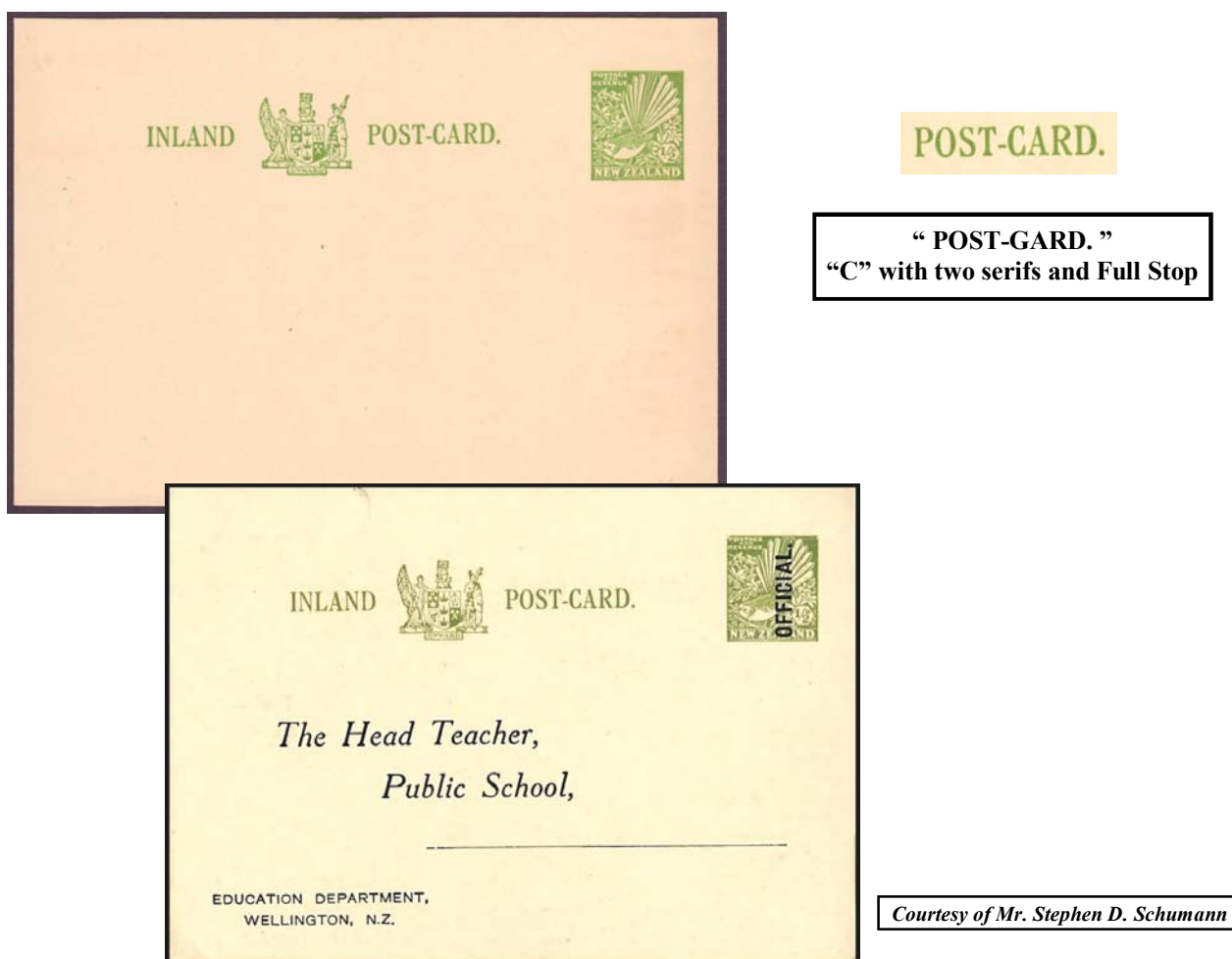
The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard was first placed on sale on May 1, 1935, the first day of issue of the 1935 Pictorial stamp series. As a result, it was the half penny postcard on issue December 11, 1936.

### **3.2 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard - December 11, 1936 - July 24, 1939**

The design of the 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard featured the words “INLAND” and “POST-GARD.” (“C” with two serifs, hyphen and full stop) in a line on either side of the Type 1 Coat of Arms <sup>(1)</sup> printed in green. The printed half penny stamp on this Postcard prepaid the postage for postcards forwarded to Inland destinations. This Postcard was withdrawn from sale in July 1939 with the release of the Half Penny George VI Postcard.

Half Penny “Fantail” Postcards were prepared for the Education Department which were vertically overprinted “OFFICIAL” <sup>(2)</sup>. Stocks of these postcards were subsequently overprinted “1d” for use following the increase in the Inland Postcard rates on October 1, 1939.

***Fig 3.2 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postal Stationery Postcard  
and the 1935 “OFFICIAL ” Postcard for use by the Department of Education***

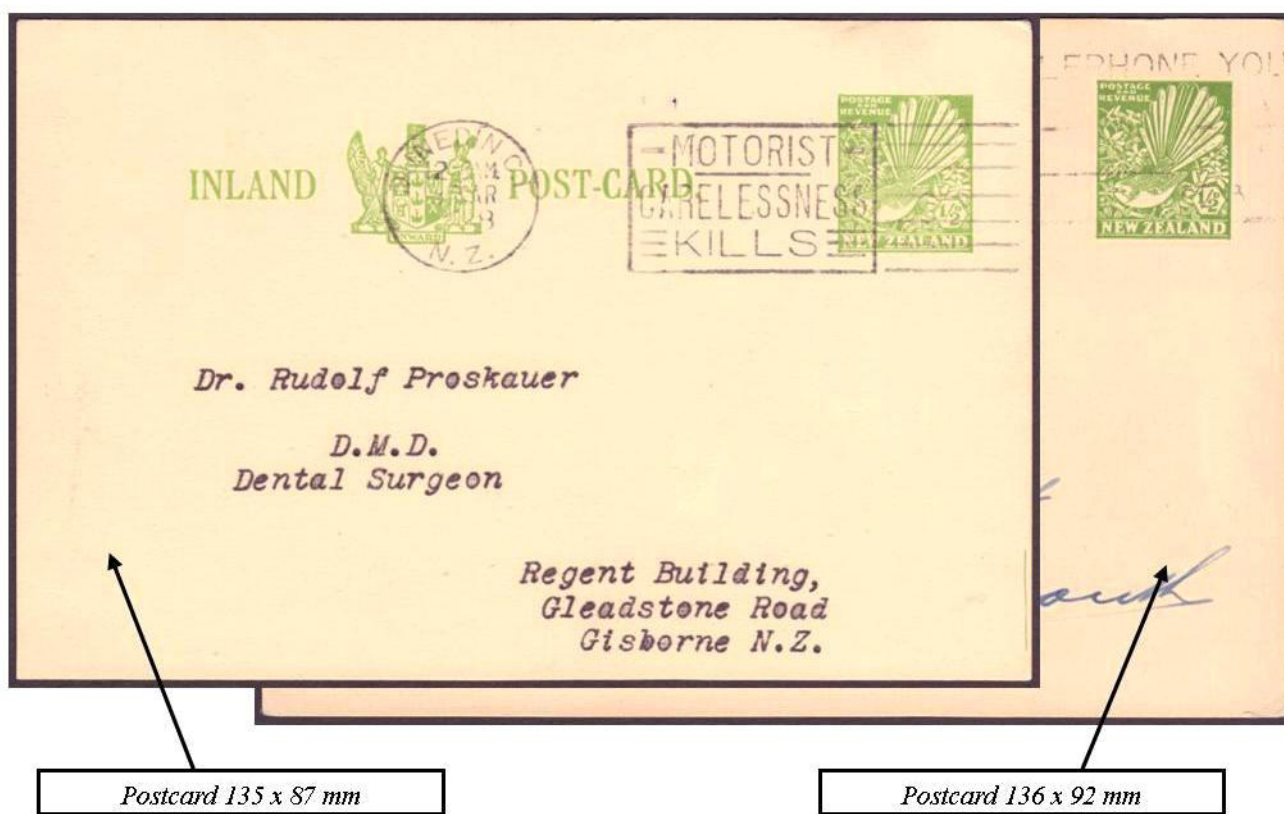


**3.2.1 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard - Printing & Production Varieties**

An incorrectly guillotined variety where part of the Fantail image appears on both the left and right hand sides of the postcard has been noted <sup>(1)</sup>. Previously unpublished research indicates that the 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcard may have been issued in noticeably varying dimensions. Fig 3.3 illustrates an example in the authors’ collection where the card as issued appears to be 5 mm shorter in height than normal.

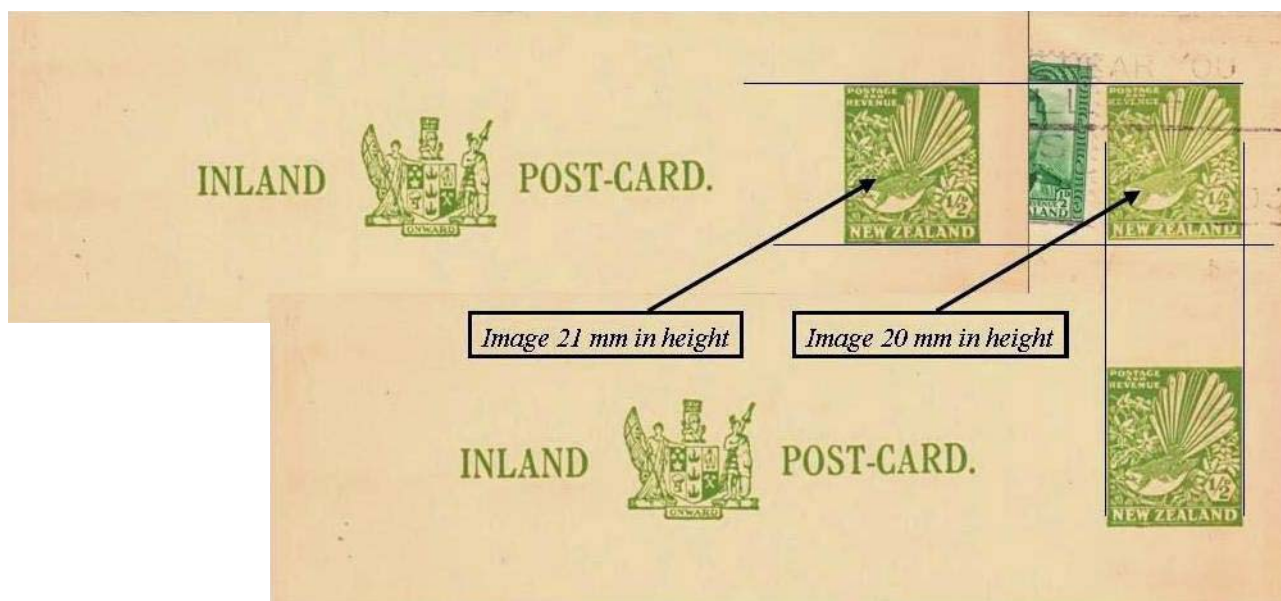
Differences in stamp image size and relative position are noticeable with many of the postal stationery issues during the George VI Period. Figure 3.4 shows that the height of the stamp image of the 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcard can vary between 20 and 21 mm. The width of the stamp image appears to be more consistent with only minor variations around the normal of 17.5 mm. The cause of these differences seem to be related to printing machine parameters as the taller stamp image examples seem to have better defined upper and lower frame lines as compared to those observed on the shorter images.

*Figure 3.3 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard Dimension Variations*



**3.2.1 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard - Printing & Production Varieties (cont’d)**

**Figure 3.4 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Postcard Stamp Image Variations**



**3.3 The 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard - July 25, 1939 - September 30, 1939**

The design of the 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard also featured the words “INLAND” and “POST-GARD.” in an line on either side of the Type 1 Coat of Arms <sup>(1)</sup>.

The requirement for half penny postal stationery postcards fell away with the increase to the one penny rate for Inland Postcards on October 1, 1939. The period of current use of the 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard amounted therefore to only 68 days between July 25 to September 30, 1939 with the result that used examples of this postcard are very scarce.

This postcard is commonly found uprated with half penny stamps, most of which most were probably affixed at the point of sale at post offices throughout New Zealand. Surplus stocks were also overprinted “ONE PENNY” at the Government Printing Office but these were only available for sale from February 1940.

The 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard was not issued for official use by the Department of Education as sufficient quantities of the “Fantail” Official Postcards were available during the short period the 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcards were in current use.



**Fig 3.5 1939 Half Penny  
George VI  
Postal Stationery Postcard**

**3.4 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Newspaper Wrapper- December 11, 1936 - July 1939**

The design of all newspaper wrappers issued during the George VI Period featured a rectangular instruction panel to the left of the stamp image. The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Wrapper was first issued May 1, 1935 and was the half penny wrapper available at post offices at the start of the George VI Period. Printing of this wrapper continued into October 1938 and use into mid 1939.

The instruction panel text states that “Only a newspaper or other matter which the postage is  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. may be enclosed in this wrapper”. It is not certain if this message was to have been literally interpreted, i.e., no additional postage be affixed to the wrapper to deal with overweight items. The 1d. Kiwi Wrapper, was also issued in 1935, during a period when the base rate for all newspaper mailing categories was  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. It seems logical then that the purpose of the 1d. Kiwi Wrapper would be for use with overweight items. The instruction panel measured 19 mm by 64 mm in length and featured wavy lines. The  $\frac{1}{2}$  fraction features a centred fraction bar between the numerals 1 and 2 as illustrated in Fig 3.6 below.



The  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Fantail Wrapper was printed on a variety of papers which were watermarked as shown in Fig. 3.7 below. The watermark ran sideways reading either left to right or right to left relative to the stamp and instruction panel as observed from the front of the wrapper. The sideways watermark is known to be reversed, likely from an early printing. One example, a used wrapper with an undated Wellington roller cancellation is known with a horizontal watermark. Another example has been reported where the “E”, apparently damaged, reads as a “F” to result in watermark reading as “NEW ZEALAND”<sup>(3)</sup>.

*Fig 3.7 One Halfpenny Fantail Wrapper Watermark  
(158 mm x 68 mm high)*

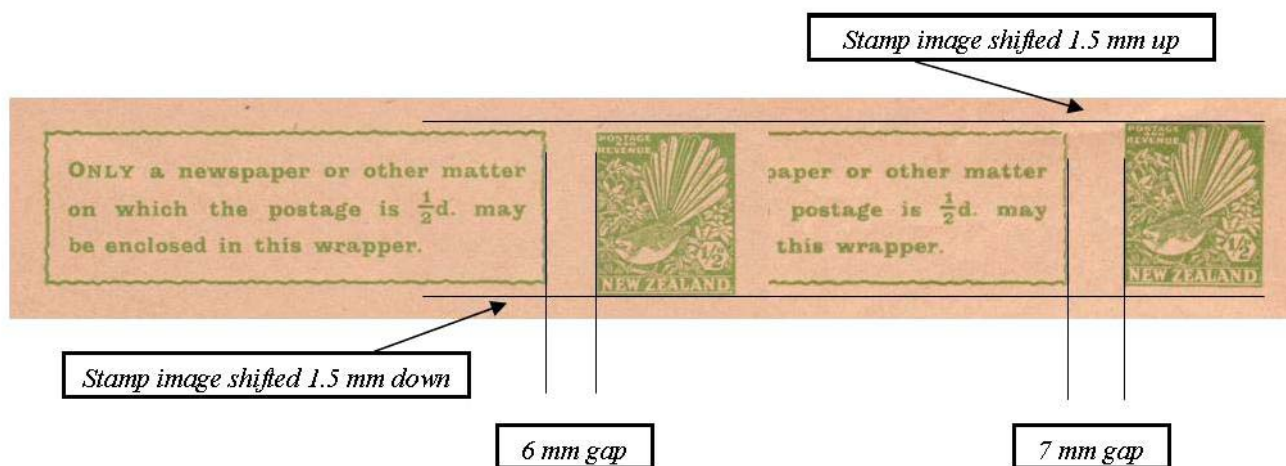


### **3.4 The 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Newspaper Wrapper- Dec 11, 1936 - July 1939 (cont’d)**

The authors’ unpublished research reveals that two observable differences can be found in the spatial arrangements of the printed stamp and instruction panel of the ½d. Fantail Wrapper as illustrated in Fig. 3.8 below.

The stamp image can be observed to be shifted upwards or downwards by as much as 1.5 mm above or below the respective top or bottom lines of the instruction panel. In addition, the gap between the left hand side of the of the stamp image and the right hand edge of the instruction panel varies from 6 mm to 7 mm in length. These differences in spatial arrangements likely occurred during the set-up of the printing plate for these wrappers and remains a subject deserving of further research in the future.

*Figure 3.8 1935 Half Penny “Fantail” Wrapper Spatial Variations*



### **3.5 The 1939 Half Penny George VI “Green” Newspaper Wrapper- July 1939 - 1942**

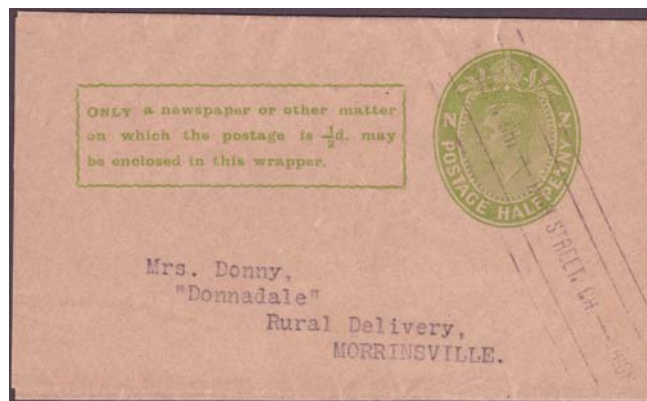
The Half Penny George VI “Green” Wrapper was first issued in July 1939. Printing of this wrapper is reported to have continued into 1941 or early 1942 but stocks of this wrapper would continued to be used for postal purposes for a few years thereafter. Many of the wrappers, particularly those emanating from larger centres, were cancelled with undated roller cancellers which has the unfortunate effect of reducing the number of examples where the date of use can be positively identified.

The changes in postal rates that came into effect October 1, 1939 did not affect the general requirement for half penny wrappers as the base rates for Overseas as well as Inland destinations remained ½d. through to the late 1940’s.

The early printings were on sideways watermarked paper as per the watermarked papers used for the ½d. Fantail Wrappers. Later printings of the ½d. George VI Green Wrappers, likely commencing June 1940, were on unwatermarked paper <sup>(3)</sup>.

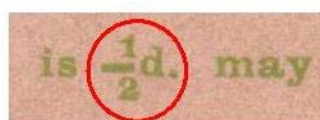
**3.5 The 1939 Half Penny George VI "Green" Newspaper Wrapper - July 1939 -1942 (cont'd)**

***Fig 3.9 1939 Half Penny George VI Green Postal Stationery Newspaper Wrapper***



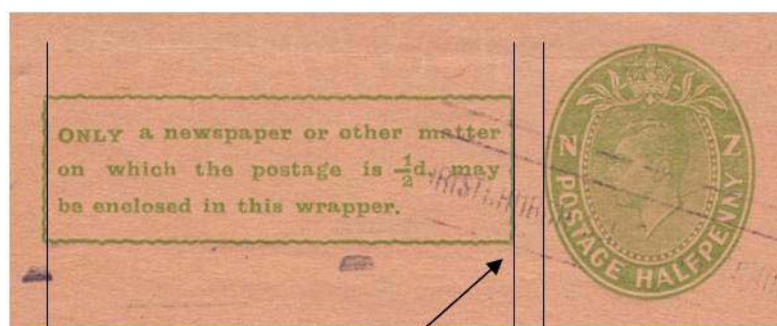
The authors' unpublished research reveals that observable differences can be found in the spatial arrangements of the stamp and instruction panel of the 1/2d. George VI Green Wrapper as illustrated in Fig 3.10 below.

The instruction panel features wavy lines and printed text as per that of the 1/2d. Fantail Wrapper with the exception of the 1/2 fraction bar which, in the case of the 1/2d. George VI Green Wrapper, is shifted to the left.

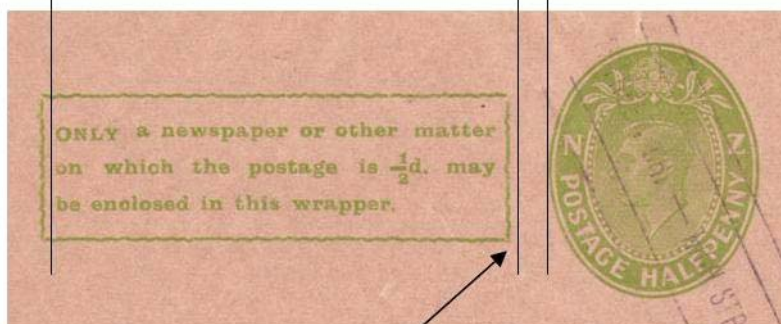


***Shifted Fraction Bar***

***Fig 3.10 1939 Half Penny  
George VI Green  
Wrapper Spatial Variations***



***Instruction Box 4 mm left of Stamp image***



***Instruction Box 5 mm left of Stamp image***

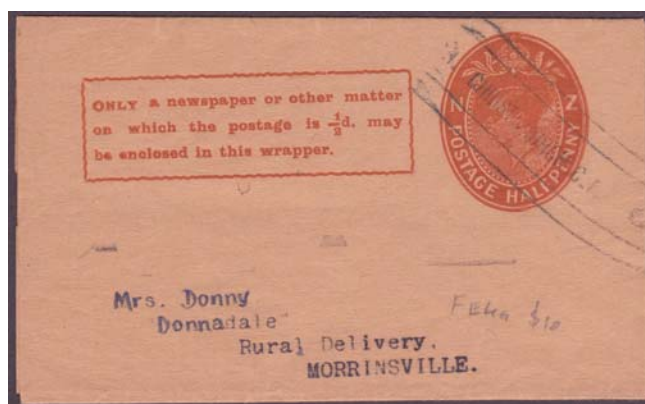
### 3.6 The Half Penny George VI "Brown" Newspaper Wrappers

The Half Penny George VI "Brown" Wrapper was first issued in 1942 and the last deliveries of this wrapper were made in July 1950. Over the period 1942 to July 1950, There were three distinct printing varieties of the instruction panel text <sup>(3)</sup>.

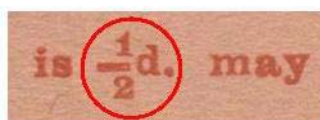
#### 1942 - 47 Printings - The ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper

The same instruction panel printing forme was used for the 1942-47 printings as had been used on the 1939 ½d. George VI Green Wrapper. At least one printing was on watermarked paper but examples of this wrapper are scarce. The 1942 - 47 printings are distinguished from later printings by the off-centre fraction bar shifted to the left.

**Fig 3.11 1942 Half Penny George VI Brown Postal Stationery Newspaper Wrapper**

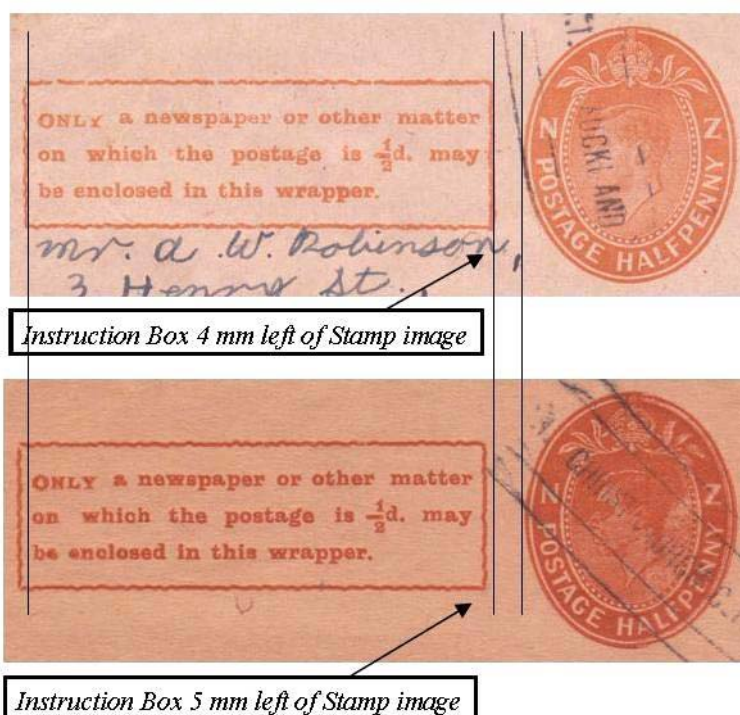


The 1942 - 47 ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper has been noted by the authors to have the same spatial variety as was observed with the 1939 ½d. George VI Green Wrapper. This spacing variation has been observed in wrappers with dark buff papers of the early printings as well as the light buff papers of the later printings.



**Shifted Fraction Bar**

**Fig 3.12 1942 - 47 Half Penny George VI Brown Wrapper Spatial Variations**



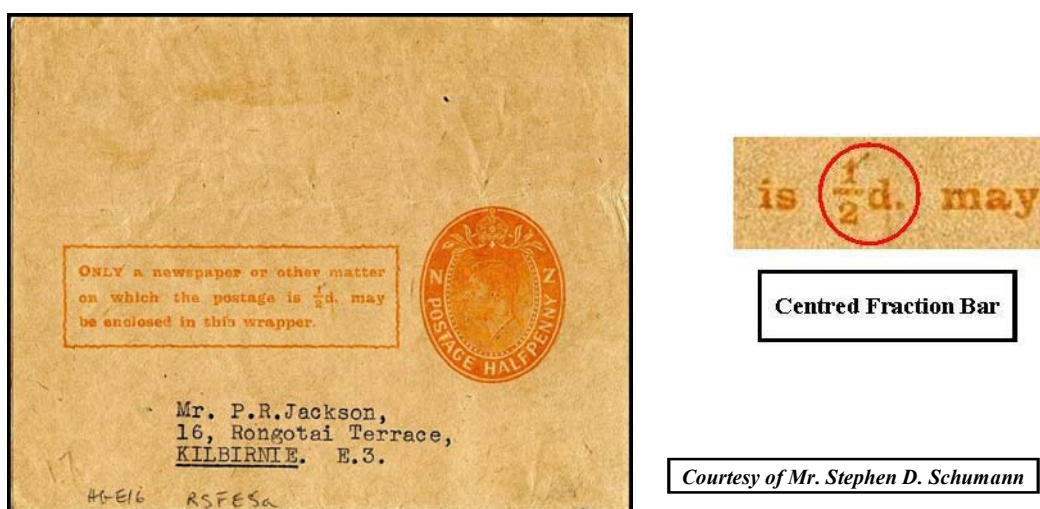
### **3.6 The Half Penny George VI “Brown” Newspaper Wrappers (cont’d)**

#### **1948 Printing - The ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper**

The 1948 Printing of the ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper was made using the 1935 ½d. Fantail instruction panel printing forme and the George VI surface printed stamp. The use of the 1935 forme resulted in the appearance for the first time for George VI Wrappers of a normally centred fraction bar for the ½d. value in the instruction panel.

This is a very scarce Wrapper as it is thought that only one printing of the 1948 ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper was made using the 1935 instruction panel forme <sup>(3)</sup>.

**Fig 3.13 1948 Half Penny George VI Brown Postal Stationery Newspaper Wrapper**



#### **1949 - 1950 Printings - The ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper**

The 1949-50 Printings of the ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper were made using a new forme for the instruction panel which featured straight perimeter lines, a centred fraction bar for the ½ value and revised script as compared to the earlier printings. The date of issue is given as May 1949 and the last deliveries were made in July 1950 <sup>(3)</sup>.

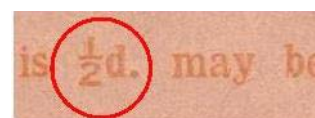
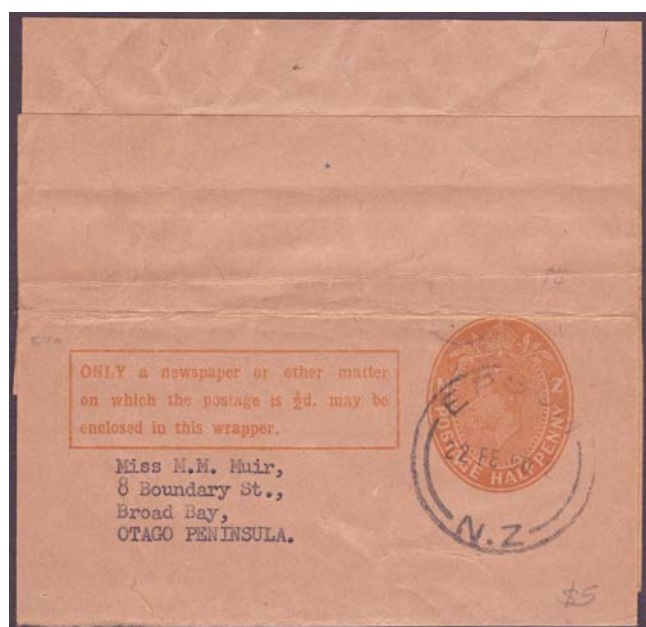
In addition to the straight lines bounding the instruction panel, the new forme is easily recognized by the placement of the word “be” at the end of the second line of the text. In previous formes the word “be” appeared at the start of the third line. Also notable is that the base of the numeral “1” touches the bar of the fraction ½ in the instruction panel of the 1949 - 50 printings whereas previous versions of the instruction panel featured a gap between the “1” and the bar.

The gap between the instruction panel and stamp is 5 mm. No narrow (4mm) gap examples have been identified by the authors as of the present time.

The 1949 - 50 ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper is also characterized by the very faint appearance of the stamp image. In some examples, it is very difficult to discern King George’s image as illustrated in Fig 3.14 overleaf. Clearly these printing dies were coming to the end of their useful life by 1950 but, with the planned changes in postal rates for July of that year, there was little incentive to replace these dies.

### 3.6 The Half Penny George VI “Brown” Newspaper Wrappers (cont’d)

#### 1949 - 1950 Printings - The ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper (cont’d)



Centred Fraction Bar  
with “ 1 ” touching

*Fig 3.14 1949 Half Penny George VI Brown  
Postal Stationery Newspaper Wrapper*

### 3.7 The Half Penny Wrappers - Some Concluding Thoughts

Base half penny rates fell away with the increases in postal rates that came into effect July 16, 1950 and only 1d. denominated Wrappers were issued from that date. The ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper met the requirement for newspapers posted to Inland and British countries destinations up to July 16, 1950 and other Overseas destinations until July 7, 1948.

Following the discontinuance of the Fantail half penny stamp die to produce Wrappers in 1939, the original George VI half penny stamp die continued to be used through the entire eleven year printing life for these Wrappers (1939 to 1950). Meanwhile, as reviewed in the preceding pages, new instruction panel forms were introduced at various times for the Half Penny Wrappers over the course of the George VI Period. The most important differences (or similarities) of these instruction panels are summarized in Table 3.1 below.

| <i>Table 3.1 George VI Period Half Penny Wrappers</i> |  |                            |                           |
|---|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Wrapper</u>  | <u>Fraction Bar</u>                    | <u>Instruction Panel</u>   | <u>Type-setting</u>       |
| 1935 Fantail &<br>1948 George VI Brown                | Centred                                | Wavy Lines; 64 mm wide     | “be” at start of 3rd line |
| 1939 George VI Green &<br>1942-47 George VI Brown     | Shifted to the Left                    | Wavy Lines; 62 mm wide     | “be” at start of 3rd line |
| 1949-50 George VI Brown                               | Centred; 1 touches the<br>fraction bar | Straight Lines; 62 mm wide | “be” at end of 2nd line   |

Finally, variations in paper type, colour and watermarks have been observed for most of the printings listed in Table 3.1 and are briefly described in **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX** <sup>(3)</sup>. This remains an area of study which would benefit from further research in the future.

**Bibliography - Section 3 Half Penny Postal Stationery**

- (1) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ pp. 39-41, 44 & 45
- (2) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ p. 85-87
- (3) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ pp. 306-13