

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

A Study Paper

Section 7 Half Penny Stamps and Postal History - Byways less well Travelled



by

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Section 7 Half Penny Stamps and Postal History - Byways less well Travelled

The focus of Sections 2 through 6 of this Study Paper has been to explore the use of half penny stamps and postal stationery during what one might refer to as the normal course of events for those using various postal services to forward their correspondence to their intended recipients at home and abroad. This section explores categories of half penny stamps and postal stationery and their usage which either fell outside the mainstream of the Post & Telegraph Department's day to day activities or otherwise deserve special mention, in particular:

Section 7.1 Private Half Penny Postal Stationery Envelopes

Section 7.2 Half Penny Postage Due - Stamps and Postal History

Section 7.3 Government Life Insurance Department Mail

Section 7.4 The 1939 1d. Overprint on the ½d. Health Stamp Issue

7.1 Printed to Private Order Half Penny Postal Stationery Envelopes

From time to time, private companies could make arrangements to have postal stationery item produced for their own use. Printed to Private Order Half Penny Postcards were produced with some regularity up to about 1930 but apparently this practice fell away and no Printed to Private Order Postcards were produced during the George VI Period ⁽¹⁾.

The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX indicates that half penny postal stationery envelopes were produced for a number of companies or organizations as summarized below ⁽²⁾. Surviving examples of these Envelopes are limited in number.

***Table 7.1 Half Penny Postal Stationery Envelopes Reported Production
December 11, 1936 - September 30, 1939***

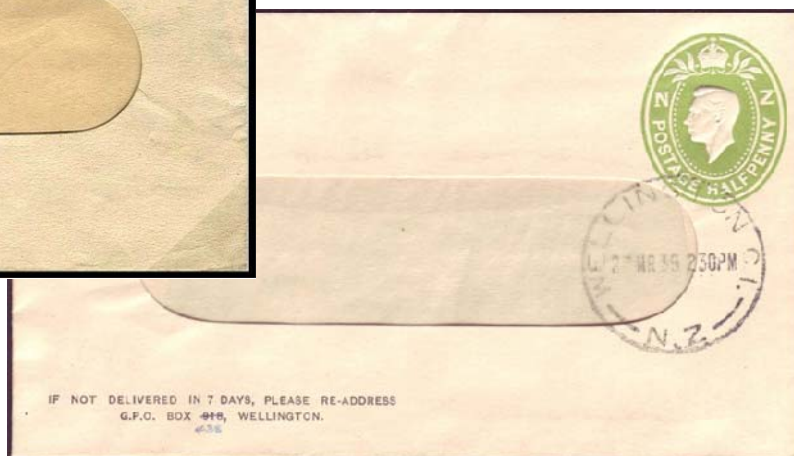
<u>Printing Die</u>	<u>Printing Dates (est. quantities)</u>	<u>Recipient Company</u>	<u>Availability</u>
GV 1913 ½d.	March 1937 (9,900)	Marriotts Ltd	Unknown ?
1935 ½d. Fantail	July 1938 (10,000) ⁽³⁾	Marriotts Ltd	Unknown ?
1935 ½d. Fantail	Various 1938 (25,900) ⁽³⁾	Alliance Finance Ltd	2 Examples reported
1939 ½d. George VI	July, August 1938 (189,600)	Alliance Finance Ltd	About 10 extant
1939 ½d. George VI	August 1939 (2000)	Court Woodford, etc.,	4 Examples reported



Courtesy of Mr. Stephen D. Schumann

***Fig 7.1 1935 Half Penny Fantail Private Envelope - Alliance Finance Ltd.
posted in Wellington September 12, 1938***

***Fig 7.2 1939 Half Penny George VI Private Envelope - Alliance Finance Ltd.
posted in Wellington March 27, 1939***



7.1 Private Half Penny Postal Stationery Envelopes (cont'd)

At least four Printed to Private Order Half Penny Postal Stationery Envelopes for Court Woodford, No.6583, Ancient Order of Foresters survive, two of which are shown below. Both were used to forward Inland letters after the October 1, 1939 rate change and are uprated accordingly with an additional one and one half penny in postage stamps.

As these envelopes bear a printed one half penny stamp, it is thought that these were produced with the intention or at least the possibility that they could be used to contain Inland Printed or Commercial Papers in the period prior to October 1, 1939. As the envelopes were only printed in August 1939, the period when these envelopes could have been used for this purpose and without additional postage stamps affixed was very brief indeed.

The timing of the production of these envelopes provides an interesting insight into the planning associated with the October 1939 rate increases. It would seem a bit odd that a private envelope denominated with a half penny stamp would be ordered and produced with less than two months of effective shelf life. We know from the surviving examples that the envelope continued to be used into 1942, so it would seem Court Woodford would have anticipated their order of some 2000 envelopes would provide for their needs for a considerable period of time.

Rather, the timing and nature of this order would suggest that perhaps the October 1939 increases were not anticipated by the Post and Telegraph Department in August 1939. This inference arises in a number of other circumstances involving the October 1939 increases and is considered in some depth in Section 8 - Summary and Conclusions - of this Study Paper.

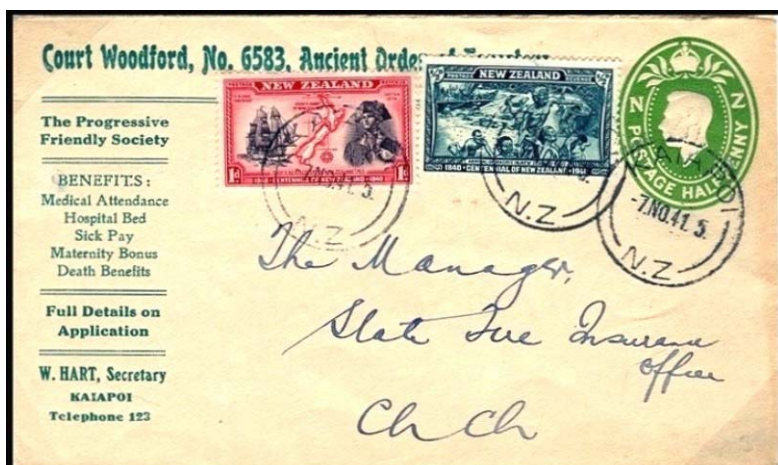


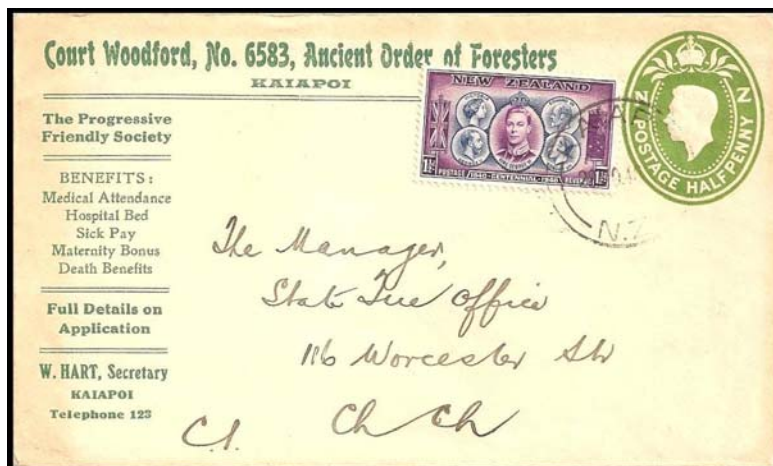
Fig 7.3 1939 Half Penny George VI Private Envelope - Court Woodford, No. 6583, Ancient Order of Foresters - uprated with a 1940 ½d. and a 1d. Centennial Issue stamp to pay the 2d. Inland Letter rate

Posted from Kaiapoi to Christchurch November 7, 1941

Courtesy of Mr. Stephen D. Schumann

Fig 7.4 1939 Half Penny George VI Private Envelope - Court Woodford, No. 6583, Ancient Order of Foresters - uprated with a 1940 1½d. Centennial Issue stamp to pay the 2d. Inland Letter rate

Posted from Kaiapoi to Christchurch November 29, 1940



Courtesy of Mr. Art Klass

7.2 The Half Penny Postage Dues and Postal History

As was common with many postal administrations, New Zealand issued postage due stamps to affix on mail upon payment by the addressee of deficient postage. Two half penny postage due stamps were in current issue during the George VI Period, the 1928 and 1938 printings of the 1920 Design (withdrawn on August 15, 1939) and the 1939 Design issued on August 16, 1939. These stamps were withdrawn September 30, 1951 when the use of separate postage due stamps ceased and definitive stamps used thereafter to pay deficient postage ⁽⁴⁾.

As most short-paid mail was charged at double the deficient postage identified by postal authorities for a particular item, the question naturally arises as to the utility of a dedicated half penny stamp for postage due purposes. This subject was recently examined by Dale ⁽⁵⁾ and previously by Samuel ⁽⁶⁾. From these writings, four possible circumstances have been identified as ones which would apply to the George VI Period as described in sub-sections 7.2.1 to 7.2.4 below. In addition, the authors have identified a fifth circumstance where the use of a half penny postage due stamp, in combination with other postage due stamps, might have occurred in a brief period shortly before postage due stamps were withdrawn from service.

7.2.1 Half Penny Deficiency on Government Inland Mail (Dec 11, 1936 to Sept 30, 1939)

Short-paid Correspondence to/from Government departments was only charged single deficiency during the George VI Period. In the period up to September 1939, half penny rates applied to various categories of Postcards, Commercial and Printed Papers and in the event, if an item did not have a half penny stamp affixed, then a postage due charge of ½d. would be applied to postcards originating from government departments.

One example of this circumstance is illustrated in Ingram's 1997 article appearing in *The Mail Coach* ⁽⁷⁾ and reproduced below in Fig. 7.5. While the postcard in question is marked ½d. deficient, an adhesive half penny stamp is not affixed to this example. Notwithstanding the range of possibilities for the occurrence of government related correspondence bearing a ½d. postage due stamp, the authors have as yet not seen such an example dated in the George VI Period.

Fig 7.5 Registrar of Electors "Official" Postcard forwarded within Hamilton handstamped ½d. "TO PAY DEFICIENT POSTAGE"



Courtesy The Collection of the Late Mr. Ron Ingram

7.2.2 Business Reply Cards (Inland Destinations) (December 11, 1936 to February 28, 1954)

Business Reply Cards, Envelopes and Wrappers were mailed under permit free of charge in the first instance. The amount collected from the sender upon return of the reply card etc., was ½d. in addition to the normal postage rates charged on postcards, letters, or wrappers as the case may be. The ½d. fee was effective throughout the George VI Period ^(8, 9). However, the use of postage due stamps was discontinued on September 30, 1951 and so the ½d. Business Reply fee was paid by a half penny postage regular issue stamp after that date.

Fig. 7.6 shows an example of a Business Reply Card returned to Whales Optical Service and Deaf Aid Specialists where a 1939 1d. Postage Due stamp paid the Postcard rate for the returned reply card and a 1939 ½d. Postage Due stamp paid the Business Reply Card return Fee.



Fig 7.6 The 1939 Half Penny and One Penny Postage Due stamps pay the 1½d. Business Reply Card fee

***Return Posted from Oxford to
Christchurch
November 21, 1939***

Courtesy of Mr. L. D. (Laurie) Dale

7.2.3 Letters received from Places where no stamps are available

From time to time, the Post and Telegraph Department accepted letters from places where no stamps were available. In such cases, only the actual deficiency was charged to the letter's recipient. To date the authors have not seen an example of this type with New Zealand postage due stamps affixed.

One very specific configuration that could be imagined would be a letter from Tristan da Cunha to New Zealand during the "All-up" Empire Air Mail Service period where 1½d. of postage would be affixed at the final destination. The authors have seen such an example but it is addressed to the Tunbridge Wells in England and carries on the cover the 1938 ½d. Emerald and 1d. Carmine Postage Due stamps of Great Britain cancelled March 25, 1939.

7.2.4 Letters Charged a minimum Double Deficiency rate of 2½d.

It appears that the Post & Telegraph Department charged a minimum double deficiency fee of 2½d. for a certain period early in the George VI Period. Foote has provided an example of a postcard originating from India which attracted this fee ⁽¹⁰⁾. Fig 7.7 overleaf shows a letters sent via surface means from Iraq which was also charged 2½d. in deficient postage. The authors are, as of this writing, uninformed as to the governing rules applied by the Post and Telegraph Department that gave rise to letters being charged a minimum of 2½d. during the George VI Period. This area warrants further research as time permits.

7.2.4 Letters Charged a minimum Double Deficiency rate of 2½d. (cont'd)



Fig. 7.7 (Design of) 1902 ½d. and two 1d. Postage Due stamps combine to pay the 2½d. deficiency for an inbound Overseas letter

*Posted from Dhibban, Iraq
to Wellington
November 26, 1937*

7.2.5 Fractional Half Penny Double Deficiency Charges - post 1949 Sterling Devaluation

In March 1950 the Post and Telegraph Department announced that the conversion rate used for short-paid mail would become 1d. = 4 centimes versus the former rate of 1d. = 10 centimes that had been in force since the start of the George VI Period ⁽¹¹⁾. The schedule published by the Department envisaged the possibility of a situation where an inbound letter might be surcharged 6 centimes and in this case a deficiency of 1½d. would be payable. As there were no 1½d. postage due stamps on issue at the time, this deficiency would have had to be paid by a combination of one each of half penny and a one penny or, alternately, three half penny postage due stamps.

An example of a letter has been reported where a 6 centimes surcharge has been paid by a 1944 1½d. GVI Rose-red stamp ⁽¹²⁾. The letter was received in New Zealand in November 1952 from Canada, some 12 months after the withdrawal of New Zealand's use of postage due stamps.

Fig 7.8 shows a letter mailed from Australia late February 1950 which was marked 30 centimes in deficient postage and charged 7½d. in postage due stamps which are tied by a WELLINGTON REGISTERED cancel on March 3, 1950. The deficiency of 7½d charged conforms with the new 1d. = 4 centimes rate announced in March 1950.

Fig. 7.8 (Design of) 1939 ½d., a 1d. and two 2d. Postage Due stamps combine to pay a 7½d. deficiency for an inbound Overseas letter rated 30 centimes in deficient postage
*Posted to Wellington from Melbourne, Australia
February 28, 1950*



7.3 The Half Penny Government Life Insurance Stamps and Postal History

Special purpose “Lighthouse” stamps were first issued for the exclusive use of the New Zealand Government Life Insurance Department in 1891 as the outcome of settling a dispute over postal charges between it and the Post and Telegraph Dept. Two half penny Government Life Insurance stamps were current in the George VI Period, the 1905 ½d. Lighthouse “No VR” Issue and the 1947 ½d. Lighthouse “Castlepoint” Issue ⁽⁷⁾. These stamps were limited to Inland postal use during the George VI Period although examples of use on letters to Overseas destinations do exist.

Examples of these half penny stamps used on cover are not common. The 1947 ½d. Lighthouse “Castlepoint” is quite scarce on cover as there were generally no single half penny rates to which this stamp would be applied during its period of use in the later stages of the George VI Period.



***Fig. 7.9 The 1905 ½d. Lighthouse (No VR) stamp pays the ½d. Inland Commercial Papers rate
Posted within Christchurch
March 31, 1939***

***Fig. 7.10 The 1947 ½d. “Castlepoint” and 1d “Tairaroa” stamps pay the 1½d. Inland Commercial Papers rate
Posted within Wellington
September 25, 1952***



Courtesy of Mr. Allan P. Berry (both)

7.4 The 1939 1d. Overprint of the Half Penny Health Stamp

The Post & Telegraph Department issued two Health Stamps in 1939. Initially these stamps were to be denominated ½d. and 1d. respectively. The stamps were printed by the Australian Bank Note and Stamp Printer for delivery in time for the customary release of such stamps in October 1939. The contemplated half penny stamp would have been the first issued in that denomination by the Department and was presumably intended to meet, among others, the Inland Postcard rate.

Prior to its anticipated release in October 1939, decisions were taken to increase postage rates. As noted elsewhere in this paper, there were ample stocks of half penny stamps now available to meet the reduced needs for this denomination following the October 1939 rate increases. As such, a decision was taken to overprint this ½d. and its sister 1d. stamp to 1d. and 2d. which would meet the new Inland Postcard and Letter rates respectively.

Under normal circumstances, one would have expected the Department to have ordered these stamps valued 1d. and 2d. directly from the printer. The actual outcome, whereby the ½d. and 1d. printed values had to be subsequently overprinted, again suggests that the decision to raise postage rates in October 1939 was taken on relatively short notice.



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