

**Under the Magnifying Glass: No.12 The Growth of the Black Spot by Malcolm Barton and Kim Stuckey**

One advantage of mixed lots in auctions is that they often contain multiple covers of the same rate. This was certainly true when we had the opportunity to view a large quantity of local rate Flowers covers in a recent auction.

In the lot were a considerable number of 1p Flowers local rate covers. Perhaps we could be considered lucky in viewing two covers that showed the development of the “black spot on leaf” flaw, that is present at position 57 of the decimal printing of the 1p value.



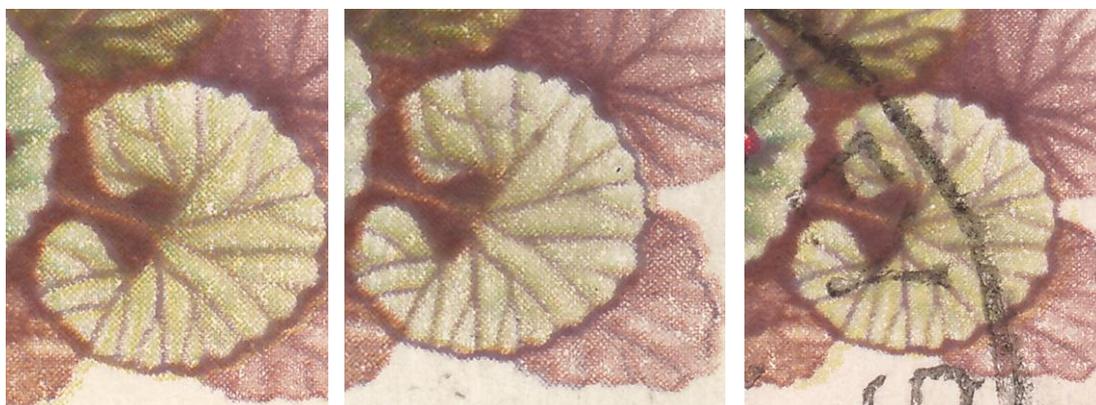
**Figure 1 – 1p Flowers Normal stamp (left) and Black Spot on Leaf Flaw (right)**



Shown above in Figure 1 are examples of the normal stamp and the stamp from Position 57 with the flaw

The stamp to the left in Figure 2 shows the characteristics of the flaw developing on the same leaf. Additional cross veins have been formed in the area of the flaw and there is a small black area where the spot developed and grew. With careful viewing these additional features can be seen with the naked eye, but are even better seen with the aid of a scanner/microscope or a strong glass.

**Figure 2 – 1p Flowers stamp with development of the Black Spot flaw**



**Figure 3 – Normal (left) plus two examples of the Flowers 1p stamp with development of the Black Spot flaw – magnified and scanned at 2400 dpi**

The two examples illustrated here are from covers dated in May and August 1973. The decimal Flowers 1p was a single printing released in June 1972, so it would be interesting to have feedback on any examples seen before mid 1973 (or indeed after mid 1973) or from mint sheets, especially those sheet numbered.



**Figure 4 - Close Up of the leaf of the Flowers 1p stamp**

Figure 4 shows a magnified close up of the leaf, where the cross veining can be seen and a black dot beginning to develop in the printing.

It is fascinating to see examples of the development of a visible and major flaw on a photogravure stamp, which was used in great quantity on local mail in the early 1970s. It also proves what an aid to research a large volume of mail can be.

Reference: The Flowers Definitives 1968-74, FIPSG Monographs No. 10 and No. 11 by Malcolm Barton.