

Under the Magnifying Glass: No.23 The 1984 Overprint Surcharges by Malcolm Barton and Kim Stuckey

Upland Goose Vol. VII No.3 of March 1984 has an illustration of two stamps; "3 Jan 1984 – Surprise Definitive Overprints" and in the New Issue News states "Two values of the 150th Anniversary set were put on sale on 3rd January overprinted to provide for the new postage rates. These overprints, carried out in the Government Printing Office in Stanley are as follows: 15p overprinted 17p & 25p overprinted 22p".

The 3rd January was also the release date for the new Insects definitives. However these definitives, or any recently issued commemorative sets, did not provide a solo stamp that satisfied either the popular Air Mail letter rate of 22p, or the Air Mail postcard rate of 17p. The postcards especially needed a single stamp to frank the small area of card available.

The next issue of Upland Goose Vol. VII No.4, has a small News item, "150th Anniversary Surcharges – These are expected to be taken off sale, if not exhausted before then, when the Lloyd's List issues are available on 7th May to supply these values".

Therefore these overprinted stamps had a short life, but were a valid issue to meet a particular short term postal need.

Geoffrey Barber produced a contemporary and informative A4 page on the issue, dated 31st January 1984. When reviewing the varieties listed below, it is worth also bearing in mind an interesting piece in the Upland Goose Vol. VIII No.7 of March 1987 which states "We are grateful to Mr. (Lewis) Clifton, Manager of the Philatelic Bureau for further information on the variations found in the 1984 overprints ... Mr. Clifton says that there was only one printing, but that the printing facility used was very old as was the type. It seems that some of the type broke during the run and had to be replaced and that was the cause of the variations reported". So whether any of the varieties we discuss now are constant throughout all sheets printed still remains to be proved some thirty three years later.

It is also worth mentioning that a sheet of the overprints consisted of fifty stamps in two panes of 25 (5 rows x 5 columns) as Plate 1A and 1B.

On the 17p value, two distinguishable types of surcharge exist:



TYPE I - Thick "1"

Occurs on 27 stamps in twin pane of 50.
Stamps in Columns 1, 2, 3 but excluding Row 2.



TYPE IIa - Thin "1" Dropped "7"

Occurs on 14 stamps in twin pane of 50.
Stamps in Column 4, plus 2/1, 2/2 and 10/5.



Type IIb - Thin "1" Dropped 7. Small break on right of "7" - stem separated from top

Occurs on 9 stamps in Column 5, stamps 1/5 to 9/5.

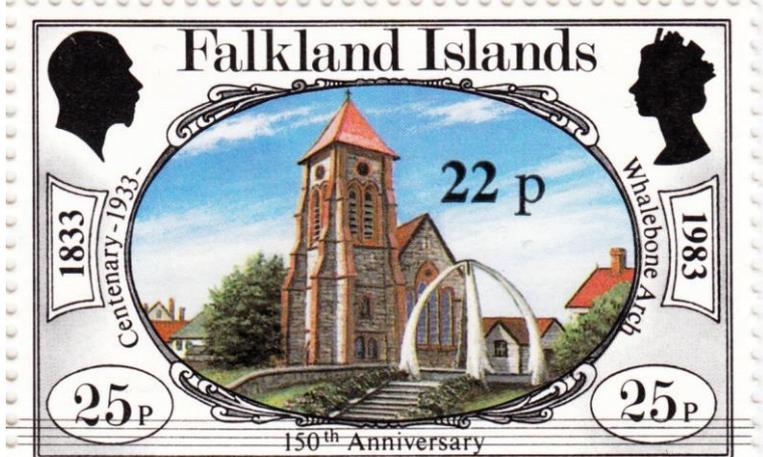


Broken "p" Variety - The main type error on this issue is the Broken "p" on the 17p at Row 4/3, where the top of the "p" is sliced through. Very visible without magnification, it merits catalogue listing.



Breaks in overprint bars Variety - Geoffrey Barber reported many breaks in the 4 overprint bars through the sheet margins for both values. However the major interest within the sheet is on stamp 4/4 of the 17p value, where all of Bar 2 and some of Bar 3 have a break through the picture oval. There are further breaks in the left hand value tablet.

Breaks in the bars on the 22p value are more difficult to see, as there is heavy background colouring behind the bars in this stamp.



Misplaced overprint 22p Variety - The Heijtz catalogue mentions, but does not illustrate, SH406v1. This is a misplaced overprint on the 25p on 22p value. Here we show an example, the main indicators being the "22p" being below the Cathedral spire and the bars cutting through the "150th Anniversary". We have seen a gutter pair where in the lower stamp the displacement is slightly more than the upper stamp, so the misplacement may get worse as you go down the sheet.



Misplaced overprint 17p Variety - There is currently no misplaced overprint for the 17p on 15p value in the catalogue. Graham Minchinton contacted us to show an eBay purchase with the surcharge shifted downwards and to the right. Key indicators are the "17p" being to the right of the tallest chimney and touching the Government House roof. Also the bars cut through "150th Anniversary". You can also see the "15p" is only struck through at the very bottom.

This example is certainly very similar to the 22p on 25p example above.

Thanks to:
Geoffrey Barber

Graham Minchinton