

Under the Magnifying Glass: No.7 An Exciting Centenary Issue Discovery **by Malcolm Barton and Kim Stuckey**

In Under the Magnifying Glass No. 4 we expressed our surprise at the discovery of a new variety on the King George V ½d definitive a century after the stamp issue. There were a large number of collectors in the 1930's looking carefully at "new issues" with a view to plating and trying to uncover new flaws. Therefore to uncover a second George V flaw and this time on the iconic 1933 Centenary issue is yet another pleasant surprise.

The credit for first uncovering the flaw goes to Nigel Kaye, who contacted us with a query on a Centenary 1½d used on a Karl Lellman late use 1946 cover from Fox Bay. There appeared to be a blue inking in the cloud just to the right of the whalecatcher mast.

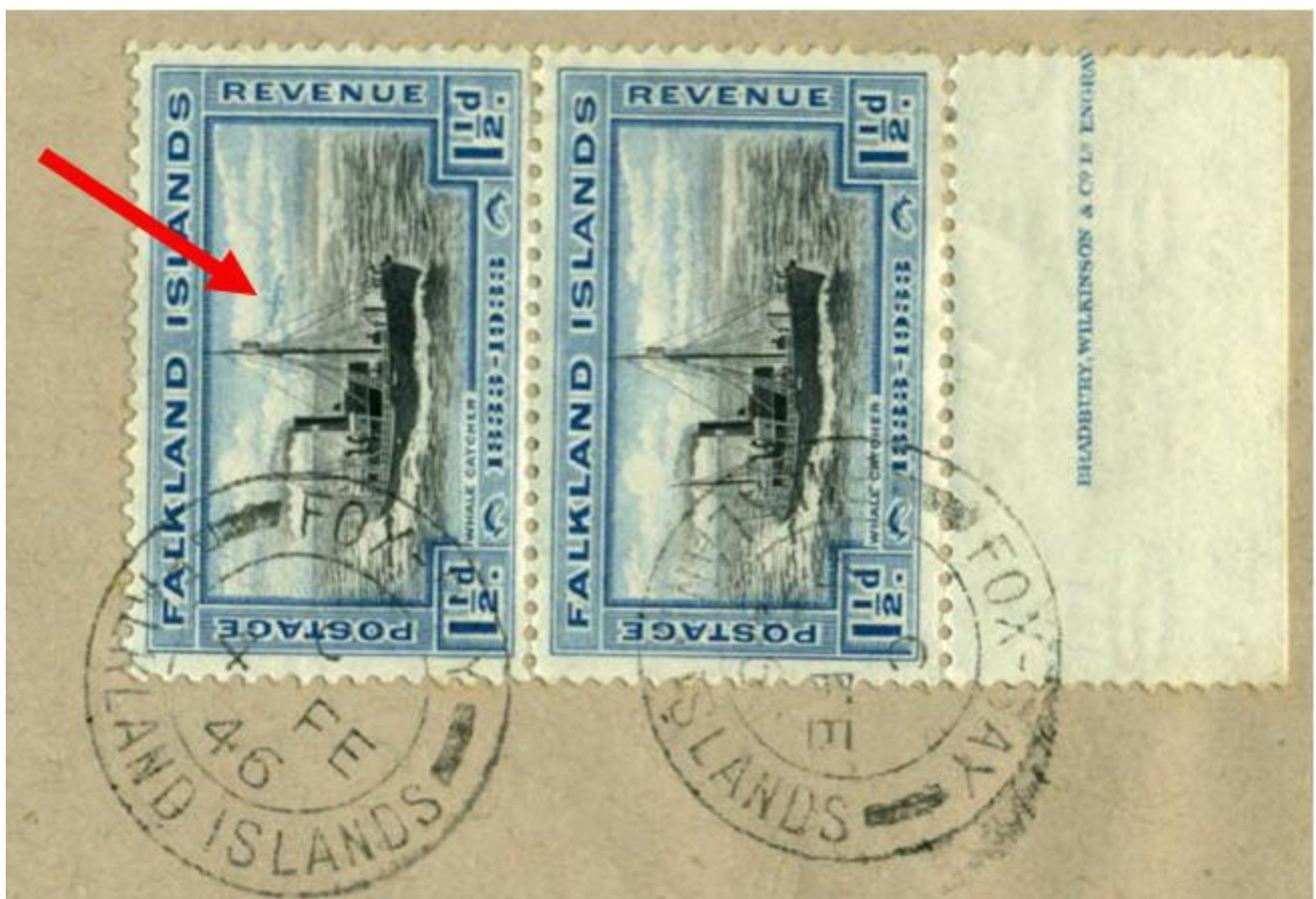


Figure 1 – The Original Cover with the Centenary 1½d Flaw plus close up of the stamps

The big clue that Karl Lellman gave us with this cover was that the position of the stamp in question was already known – the top left stamp of an imprint block of four Row 9/3 or Position 51.

This flaw may have been put to one side and forgotten about, until a startling piece of evidence appeared on ebay. A seller had not one, but two imprint blocks of the Centenary 1½d for sale. Both of them had the same “cloud flaw” on the top left stamp!



Figure 2 – The two Centenary 1½d Blocks for auction on ebay

To back this discovery up, a trawl of ebay lots found another single 1½d for sale with the same variety. So it appeared that we do have a flaw that could be constant, rather than a one off.



Figure 3 - (Variety G) Centenary 1½d “Cloud Flaw” Pos. 51 (R 9/3)

The next question about the variety was the consistency of it across two printings of the 1½d (there were two printings of all values except for three of the 3d). Here the Grosvenor auction catalogue archive (www.grosvenorauctions.com) was of great benefit – Sale 65 Lot 1518 had an imprint block of four of the Centenary 1½d without the flaw. This means that the flaw appeared only on one printing, or part way through a printing.



Figure 4 – Grosvenor Sale 65 Lot 1518 – Centenary 1½d imprint block without the flaw

Ronnie Spafford has provided useful information by looking at his stock of 1½d stamps. He found the flaw on one of his sheets, but not the other two. This sheet is marked Second Printing. For the low values of the Centenary issue the size of the selvedge does not provide any clues as to the printing, as it does on the high values. It has been reported that Maude Cary thought the top of most of the whalecatcher was more into the frame in the second printing, but this may not be consistently true across a printing. However, the flaw copies do seem to have a higher positioned vignette. You would believe that the flaw is more likely to be second printing than first if it is a plate flaw or re-entry of some kind but nothing is confirmed at this time.



Figure 5 – 1934 Cover to Norway - 1½d Value with “Cloud Flaw”

Another cover with a 1½d with the flaw has been seen on ebay, bringing our total number of stamps seen with the Cloud Flaw to six. This cover was dated in 1934, so it was later use of the Centenary stamps.

So we now throw it open to Study Group members to help us with this new discovery. Please report any examples of the “Cloud Flaw” to us. Particularly welcome would be any dated used or on cover that could help us – if any were in the time period of the first printing only being available, it would help us determining the printing of this flaw.

It is appropriate in the 80th year since the issue of this wonderful set of stamps, we could have discovered a major, visible to the naked eye flaw on the 1½d value. It is a chance to scour those dealer stockbooks!

Thanks to:

Nigel Kaye

Ronnie Spafford