

# The DISTRIBUTION of "SPECIMEN" STAMPS by the UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

By Marcus Samuel

(Continued from page 756, January 22nd)

**Circular No. 58/1: January 6th, 1891**

**BRITISH EAST AFRICA:** specimens of ½a., 1a., 2a., 4a., 8a. blue, 8a. grey, 1r. carmine, 1r. grey, 2r., 3r., 4r. and 5r. postage stamps.



**Bureau Collection.** This starts with the above-mentioned stamps, followed by the 2½a. which was distributed with the Circular dated December 23rd, 1891. The only early stamps with "Specimen" overprints are the 1894 5a. on 8a., and 7½a. on 1r., and the 1895 5a. and 7½a., which were hand-stamped SPECIMEN in violet and distributed with the Circulars dated December 3rd, 1894, and January 11th, 1895, respectively.

There appear to have been curious delays in supplying the U.P.U. with specimens of the later provisional issues. The 1895 India overprinted ½a. to 5r., including the "2½" on 1½a. sepia, were not distributed until April 24th, 1897; and the 1897 Zanzibar overprinted ½a. to 7½a., including the "2½" on 1a. indigo, and "2½" on 3a. grey and red, were not distributed until January 21st, 1898. It is probable that some of these stamps had to be reprinted for this purpose, and this could account for the surcharges on the provisionals being printed in brown-red instead of in bright red, and in the existence of an abnormal stop after "Africa." on the overprinted Zanzibar stamps distributed by the U.P.U.

**Circular No. 1089/49: March 25th, 1891**

**MONACO:** specimens of 1c., 2c., 5c., 10c., 15c., 25c., 40c., 50c., 75c., 1f. and 5f. postage stamps.

**Bureau Collection.** No stamps of Monaco are overprinted "Specimen".

**Circular No. 1322/64: April 13th, 1891**

**CAPE OF GOOD HOPE:** specimens of ¼d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 1s. and 5s. postage stamps, of triangular 1d. and 4d. postage stamps and of items of postal stationery.

**Bureau Collection.** There are no stamps with "Specimen" overprints. The triangular stamps mentioned are reprints of the 1d. and 4d. "Woodblocks".

**Circular No. 3312/155: October 9th, 1891**

**BRITISH NORTH BORNEO:** specimens of ¼c., 1c., 2c., 3c., 4c., 5c., 8c., 10c., 25c., 50c., \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 postage stamps and of a stamped postcard.



**Bureau Collection.** The 1891 set to \$10 is without any "Specimen" overprints. The 1894 25c., 50c., \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10, distributed with the Circular dated November 9th, 1894, have large Waterlow SPECIMEN overprints in serif capitals, and the later specimen stamps include the 1899 "4/CENTS" on the 1c., 2c. and 3c., unissued because the face value was increased by the surcharging, which were distributed with

the Circular dated October 26th, 1899, together with similar stamps of Labuan.

**Circular No. 3735/183: November 11th, 1891**

**PERAK:** specimens of 1c., 2c. and 5c. postage stamps.  
**NEGRI SEMBILAN, PAHANG, SELANGOR and SUNGEI UJONG:** specimens of 2c. postage stamps.

**Circular No. 1443/143: March 7th, 1892**

All Administrations of the Union are requested to supply to the British Administration, for the Inland Revenue Department which is concerned with the detection of forgeries, triple collections of the postage stamps and items of postal stationery in use. They are also requested to send a single collection to the Spanish Administration.

**Circular No. 3916/373: May 30th, 1892**

**INCREASE IN THE NUMBERS OF SPECIMENS REQUIRED FOR DISTRIBUTION.**

By the terms of Article XXXIII (formerly XXIX), as revised at the 1891 Vienna U.P.U. Congress, administrations of the Union were to communicate to one another, by the intermediary of the International Bureau, five collections of each of their postage stamps, items of postal stationery, etc. This was to take effect from July 1st, 1892. Referring to this arrangement, it is stated that after making allowance for the requirements of the Colonial Powers, the total number of quintuple collections to be supplied after that date would be 146, made up as follows.

Individual member countries	53
Great Britain and Colonies	46
French Colonies	21
Australasia	8
Portuguese Colonies	7
Spanish Colonies	4
Netherlands Colonies	3
Germany, Bavaria and Wurtemberg	3
The U.P.U.	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>

730 specimens of every new stamp would therefore be required.

**Circular No. 5372/527: July 5th, 1892**

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:** specimens of 1k., 2k., 3k., 5k., 10k., 15k. and 25k. postage stamps and of items of postal stationery.

**Circular No. 5831/577: July 20th, 1892**

**OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE:** specimens of ¼d., 1d., 2d., 2½d., 5d. and 1s. postage stamps and of items of postal stationery.



**Bureau Collection.** The 1892 ¼d. to 1s. are hand-stamped SPECIMEN in the small serif type used on the stamps of Great Britain. Because they were issued before July 1st, 1892, only three specimens of each were distributed to members of the U.P.U. The Niger Coast 1893 and 1894 sets to 1s. were distributed in mint condition, but the 1898 6d., 2s.6d. and 10s. were distributed with the Circular dated June 28th, 1898, with Waterlow SPECIMEN overprints.

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**Distribution of "Specimen" Stamps by U.P.U. (cont. from p. 785)****Circular No. 6131/602: August 1st, 1892**

REQUEST THAT STAMPS DISTRIBUTED BY THE U.P.U. SHOULD NOT HAVE "SPECIMEN" OVERPRINTS.

GUATEMALA requests further specimens and desires that they should not be marked with "Specimen" overprints which generally obscure parts of the design. Administrations might well dispense with marking the stamps for distribution between the Administrations of the Union, as their small number removes all danger of abuse. A similar request had previously been made.

During the period 1892-95, the same request is made by a number of other Administrations of the Union, and the following state that they have never used "Specimen" overprints on stamps sent for distribution: Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Congo Free State, Costa Rica, Denmark, Danish West Indies, Dominican Republic, Egypt, French Colonies, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras Republic, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Portugal, Queensland, Roumania, Russia, Salvador, Serbia, Siam, Sweden, Tunis, Turkey, Uruguay, U.S.A., Venezuela and Victoria. France states that she has ceased to use "Specimen" overprints for some time, and the Argentine Republic, the Netherlands and Switzerland state that they will cease to use them.

On the other hand, it is stated that some of the British Colonies in Australia always overprint or perforate such stamps with the word "Specimen" to prevent their illegal use. New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania state that it is not possible for them to distribute such stamps without overprints, and New South Wales says the word "Specimen" cannot reasonably provide grounds for objection. Queensland intends, in future, to cancel such stamps before they are forwarded for distribution.

The reply of the British G.P.O. is given in Circular No. 3726/189 dated July 16th, 1894, and reads as follows:—

"The question is not considered as of sufficient importance to justify an attempt to meddle with the internal rules of the Administrations of the various countries of the Union and their colonies. We believe, on the contrary, that the Offices concerned should have complete latitude to distribute their stamps, etc., with or without "Specimen" overprints according to the requirements of their rules. Although it is feasible that collectors of postage stamps would prefer to have the impression not obscured by the "Specimen" overprint, it is difficult to see how from a practical point of view any inconvenience can arise from the widely adopted use of this word on such stamps. Besides, as experience has shown, the impressions of stamps bearing this overprint are just as clear and sharp as those which do not bear it. However, we must point out that ever since a preference has been expressed for stamps which are not overprinted, the British Post Office has effected the distribution of its stamps without the word "Specimen".

The G.P.O. was to eat its last words when faced with the distribution of the King Edward VII 2s.6d., 5s., 10s. and £1 stamps of Great Britain, and the Crown Agents remained adamant in insisting on the use of "Specimen" overprints on the stamps of the territories under their control until 1948.

**Letter from the Crown Agents to De La Rue & Co. dated September 2nd, 1892**

D.L.R., page 515. "The enclosed letter from the General Post Office, relative to the supply to that Department in future of 581 specimens, instead of 351, of each new Postage Stamp, etc., is forwarded for your information and guidance. The additional specimens of Turks Islands' Postage Stamps now required, will be supplied by the Colonial Government".

It is stated that the fact that only 351 of the Turks Islands 2½d. blue had been supplied on August 17th was the reason for the matter being raised by the G.P.O. It is also stated that the number of specimens to be overprinted by De La Rue & Co. was increased from 400 to 600. It is difficult to account for the

request for 581 specimens (presumably 575 for the U.P.U., and six for the G.P.O.), unless the G.P.O. had misread the U.P.U. Circular dated May 30th, 1892. The error was soon corrected

**Letter from the G.P.O. to the Crown Agents dated September 12th, 1892**

D.L.R., pages 515 and 516. "With reference to my letter of the 26th of August and your reply of the 1st instant respecting the distribution of postage stamps etc. among the members of the Postal Union, I beg leave to acquaint you that, according to the latest information received here from the International Bureau of the Postal Union, it will be necessary for each member of the Union to send to the International Bureau in future for distribution among the various administrations belonging to the Union 730 specimens of each new postage stamp, post card, stamped envelope or wrapper issued by it.

"I have to request, therefore, that you will be good enough to send that number of specimens of each new postage stamp etc. issued in the British Crown Colonies to this Department in future for transmission to the International Bureau, together with six additional specimens for record in this office as usual—making 736 in all.

"With regard to the new Turk's Islands' 2½d. stamp of which 351 specimens have already been sent here and 230 additional specimens applied for—making 581 in all—it will now be necessary to apply for 155 more specimens, in order to make up the number now required, namely 736; and I shall feel obliged if you will communicate further with the Colonial Governments accordingly".

As in 1886, the Crown Agents ordered a number of specimens slightly in excess of those required for U.P.U. distribution. After the date of the above letter, specimens to the number of 750 were invoiced by De La Rue & Co. with any new stamps.

**Circular No. 1922/102: March 20th, 1893**

FIJI: specimens of ¼d., 1d., 2d., 2½d., 4d., 5d. on 4d., 6d., 1s. and 5s. postage stamps and of items of postal stationery.

*Bureau Collection.* The above-mentioned stamps are without "Specimen" overprints. The first stamps to be overprinted SPECIMEN were the 1903 King Edward VII ¼d. to £1.

**Circular No. 7363/412: November 2nd, 1893**

ZULULAND: specimens of ¼d., 1d., 2d., 2½d., 3d., 4d., 5d., 6d., 9d., 1s. and 5s. postage stamps and of items of postal stationery.



*Bureau Collection.* The above-mentioned stamps are hand-stamped SPECIMEN in italic capitals in violet, as used on the 1890 issues of Natal. The 1d. stamp in this set is the overprinted Natal 1d. postal fiscal, not the overprinted Great Britain 1d. lilac which does not exist with this type of "Specimen". The 1894 1d. overprinted SPECIMEN was distributed with the Circular dated April 25th, 1894, followed by the similarly overprinted ½d. and £5 with the Circular dated July 10th, 1894.

**Circular No. 6256/312: November 21st, 1894**

SAN MARINO: specimens of 25c., 50c. and 1L. postage stamps used at a local fête.

**Circular No. 6926/347: December 27th, 1894**

BRITISH LEVANT: specimens of "40 PARAS" on ¼d. postage stamps issued at the British Post Office in Constantinople.

*Bureau Collection.* There is an example of the 1893 (Feb.) 40 pa. Constantinople provisional (without any "Specimen" overprint). There are also examples of the King Edward VII 80 pa. on 5d., 4 pi. on 10d., and 12 pi. on 2s.6d. with "horseshoe" SPECIMEN overprints and of some later high values

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Distribution of "Specimen" Stamps by U.P.U. (cont. from p. 787)



with "Specimen" overprints of the types used on the stamps of Great Britain.

Circular No. 5291/184: July 26th, 1895

BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA: specimens of 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., 1/-, 2s.6d., 3s., 5s. and £1 postage stamps and of postal stationery.



**Bureau Collection.** The above-mentioned set with SPECIMEN overprints, horizontal on the high values. The £10 and £25 are not represented at all.

In addition to those supplied for the U.P.U., 1,000 of each duty up to the 5s. and 20 examples of the £1 and £10, without "Specimen" overprints, were sent to the Crown Agents "to be sold to persons who require them" (*D.L.R.*, page 551). It is also stated that the G.P.O. received four copies only of the £10 and £25. The 1896 1d. to £25 similarly overprinted, the high values vertically, were distributed with the Circular dated July 10th 1896, and it is stated that "these represent on water-marked paper the stamps which were circulated on July 26th, 1895". (New stamps on paper with a different watermark were not normally circulated to members of the U.P.U., but the £10 and £25 had not previously been circulated, although they were inscribed "Postage" as well as "Revenue")

Circular No. 5875/225: December 24th, 1896

ZANZIBAR: specimens of ½a., 1a., 2a., 2½a., 3a., 4a., 4½a., 5a., 7½a., 8a., 1r., 2r., 3r., 4r. and 5r. postage stamps.

**Bureau Collection.** The 1896 ½a. to 5r. recess-printed by De La Rue & Co., and overprinted SPECIMEN. The distribution of the 1895-96 India overprinted ½a. to 5r., and the "2½" on 1a., "2½" on 1½a., and "2½" on 2a. provisionals was delayed until April 24th, 1897, and the 2½a. provisionals had to be reprinted with the surcharges in brown-red. These are all without "Specimen" overprints, as are the 1896 British East Africa overprinted ½a., 1a., 2½a., 4½a., 5a. and 7½a. and the 1897 "2½" on 4a. myrtle which were distributed with the Circular dated January 21st, 1898. The "2½" surcharge and the "Zanzibar" overprint on the 2½a. deep blue are struck in brown-red.

Circular No. 3788/225: August 14th, 1897

SARAWAK: specimens of 1c., 2c., 3c., 4c., 5c., 6c., 8c. dark green, 8c. pale green, 10c., 12c. and 25c. postage stamps.

**Bureau Collection.** The above can be identified as the 1888-97 typographed 1c., 3c., 5c., 8c., 10c., 12c. and 25c. and the 1895 recess-printed 2c., 4c., 6c. and 8c., all without "Specimen" overprints. They were followed by the 2c., 50c. and \$1 distributed with the Circular dated September 9th, 1897, the 16c.

and 32c. and the 2c. on 12c. and 4c. on 7c. which were distributed with the Circular dated August 12th, 1899. The first stamps with SPECIMEN overprints are the 1918 1c. to \$1 but the 1922-23 2c. to 30c. have no such overprints, although they were distributed as colour changes.

Circular No. 5304/283: November 19th, 1897



BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY: specimens of ½d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 8d., 1s., 2s., 2s.6d., 3s., 4s., 5s. and 10s. postage stamps.

**Bureau Collection.** The 1896-97 ½d. to 10s., as above, are without "Specimen" overprints. The 1898-1908 2½d., 3d., 2s.6d., 3s., 7s.6d., 10s., £1, £2, £5 and £10 are perforated SPECIMEN, as is the 1905 Victoria Falls 5d. (the 1d., 2½d., 1s., 2s.6d. and 5s. are overprinted SPECIMEN in serifed capitals), as are the 1909 "RHODESIA" ½d. to £1 and the 1909-11 5d. on 6d., 7½d. on 2s.6d., 10d. on 3s. and 2s. on 5s.

Circular No. 3262/139: June 28th, 1898

MOROCCO AGENCIES: specimens of overprinted Gibraltar 5c., 10c., 20c., 25c., 40c., 50c., 1p. and 2p. postage stamps and of items of postal stationery.



**Bureau Collection.** Examples of the 5c. to 2p. with De La Rue SPECIMEN overprints, followed by the 1903-05 5c. to 2p. similarly overprinted. There are also the King Edward VII Great Britain overprinted 40c. on 4d., 1s., 2s.6d. and 12p. on 10s. with "horseshoe" SPECIMEN overprints and of some later high values with "Specimen" overprints of the types used on the stamps of Great Britain.

(To be continued)

**For collectors of Swiss stamps**

The *Amateur Collector's Stamp Catalogue of Switzerland 1965*, edited by L. N. & M. Williams, now includes a table of quantities printed for all Swiss stamps from the Federal Issue of 1882 onwards. Another valuable appendix quotes prices for used blocks of four from the 1861 issue onwards. This is a catalogue for the medium collector who does not require a listing that is too specialised, but requires more help than the general catalogues afford. A new spiral binding provides for "flat" opening at any page. Price 12s. (postage 1s.), from Amateur Collector Ltd., 151 Park Road, London, N.W.8.

**RECENT COMMONWEALTH PRINTINGS**

Released by Crown Agents 15.1.65

Antigua: 5c. No change.

Released by Crown Agents 18.1.65

St. Vincent: 50c. Perf. 13½×13½(C) for the first time.