

## Two pence halfpenny Provisional First Setting - Introduction

In May 1890, the Jamaican Governor gave way to popular pressure and reduced the letter rate to the USA, from 4d to 2½d.

The request to London for stamps in the new denomination was not met straight away. He had forgotten to ask permission to lower the rate.

Until new stamps could be introduced in February 1891, a local printer, Camille Vendryes, used a hand-press to overprint existing 4d stamps with the new denomination: TWO PENCE / HALF-PENNY.

Lacking enough type to overprint a complete pane of 60 at one go, he set up type to overprint one column of ten at a time. This meant each sheet had to be over-printed six times, to cover the six columns. This arrangement is known as the first setting.

The type was a little old and bashed in places. Each position in the column of ten can be distinguished by differences in the position and shape of certain letters. For example, in Row 5, the 'L' in HALF is thicker than normal.

A useful feature is the position of the vertical stroke of the letter 'T' of TWO in relation to the second vertical stroke of 'H'. In some rows 'T' is slightly to the left, in others to the right.

The following sheet shows a reconstruction of two complete columns from large pieces. Note that the overprints on the two stamps on each row are not always level. Remaining sheets use examples to illustrate the constancy of key features, but also the overall variability of impressions from the same position.

TWO PENCE  
HALF-PENNY



Cover to New York, September 22nd 1890. Mandeville Squared Circle handstamp.

Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting: Reference pieces



Ten set vertically. 1mm between overprint lines. Ex BWISC 50th

## Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Column Five



This horizontal strip is from Row Two. Ex Ferrary  
The right-hand stamp shows the over-inking typical of Column 5 in this setting.



Row 5



Row 7

The over-inking is believed to occur because this was the first column to be overprinted. In support of this, double-overprints from this setting normally have one over-inked strike, the one that was made first and is incorrectly placed away from the original value tablet.

The printer would be able to notice the incorrect alignment of the chase after the first column had been printed.



Images of double-overprint stamps from the first setting. These show the characteristic over-inking of Column 5 in the impression at the top of the stamp.

This upper impression is incorrectly positioned, and was the first applied. The lower impression is correctly placed over the original value tablet.

The original stamps are shown on the sheets for Rows Four and Seven, respectively.

Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Rows One and Two

Row 1, 'T' left



two, 2nd leg of 'W' short, 'O' flat at one o'clock



Row 2, 'T' slightly left



PENCE, 1st 'E' thick



Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Rows Three and Four

Row 3, 'T' very slightly left



PENCE, 'N' thick, PENNY, 'N' second vertical short at top



Row 4, 'T' slightly left



two, left arm weak, inconsistently, HALF, 'F' thick



A66 Port  
Maria

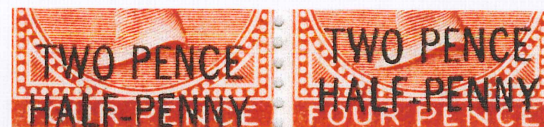


Double  
overprint

Double overprint both Row four, upper with characteristic 'Column 5' heavy inking.  
Jamaica Exhibition postmark dated May 16th 1891, the last day of the Exhibition.  
Usage undoubtedly philatelic, but fantastically rare.

Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Row Five

Row 5, 'T' slightly left



two, 'W' dent in first downstroke, HALF, 'L' thick, PENNY, 'E' sometimes thick, bottom stroke short



SP 17  
1890



JA 10  
1891



The later, January 1891, dated stamp illustrates how greatly the letter 'W' of two, with its small dent, deteriorated over time.

Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Row Six

Row 6, 'T' left



two, 'O' thick, with weakness at 11 o'clock,  
 HALF, 'F' sometimes shows a partial bottom stroke,  
 PENNY, 'NY' very slightly lower



Salt Gut  
 CDS

JA 13  
 1891

Right-hand copy of the used pair has a partial double overprint at the top.



Complete row. Montego Bay, January 12th 1891. Col 4 shows break on 'O'. Ex Swarbrick, Jarvis

The HALE variety

The 'F' of HALF in some cases develops the appearance of an 'E'.  
 Usually, this is no more than a bud, but the central example, illustrated, is nearly complete.



Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Rows Seven and Eight

Row 7, 'T' right



PENCE, 'C' top curve straightens vertically downward



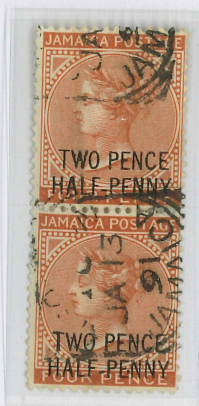
Col 5

FE 24  
1891

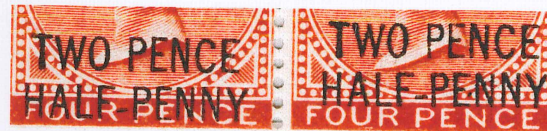


AU 4  
1890

AP 6  
1891



Row 8, 'T' directly over

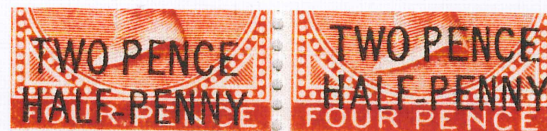


two, 'T' thick



Two pence halfpenny Provisional - First setting Rows Nine and Ten

Row 9, 'T' directly over



two, 'T' slender



3 C



3 R

Coincidentally, both copies are dated October 7th 1890, with the same Kingston Squared Circle No. 3 handstamp. However, one has code 3C (a morning time code), the other code 3R (later in the afternoon).



Row 10, 'T' right

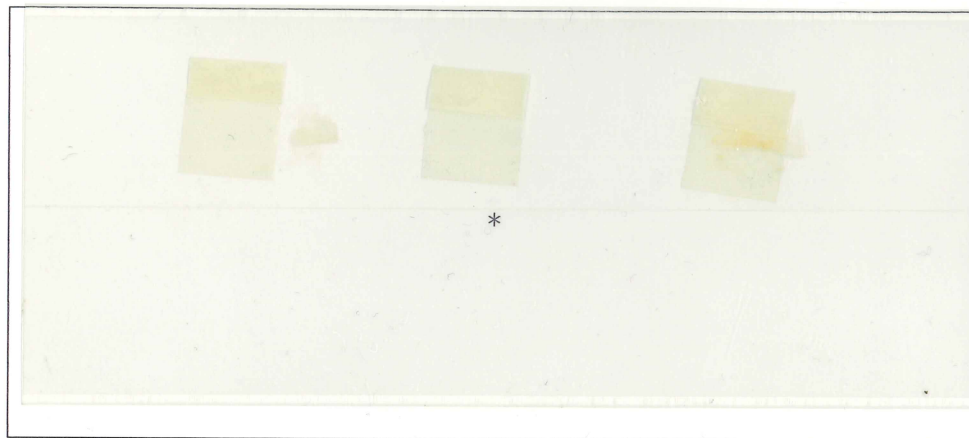


HALF, 'L' thick



In the right-hand copy, an extra dot of ink on the bottom arc of the letter 'C' of PENCE gives it the appearance of a 'G'.

Two pence halfpenny Provisional  
Second and third settings



Second setting. Set 12 as two rows of six. Ex Collett and Swarbrick.



Third setting. Three set horizontally. Ex Jarvis.

From left to right in this block: Position 3 - gaps between Ps and Es;  
Position 1 - broken N and E in PENCE;  
Position 2 - second N of PENNY has short second downstroke.

## 1890 provisional 2½d on 4d.

On 19th May 1890, the Governor of Jamaica wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London to inform him that he had reduced the rate of postage to the United States. The rate had been 4d, and now it would be 2½d. London was asked to supply 2½d stamps.

The Secretary of State replied that the Governor did not have this change in his gift, but eventually a compromise was reached. The change could go ahead, but no 2½d stamp would be supplied until 1891, when London planned to introduce the reduction across the Empire. Jamaica would need to sort out the stamps for herself until then.



Reconstruction of the second setting of the overprint

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12

By June 1890, 4d stamps were being overprinted in Kingston using a handpress. The printer did not have enough type to overprint a sheet in one action, at first only covering one column, requiring six repetitions to cover a sheet. In his second setting, he covered two rows of six, now requiring only five repetitions. But this forced him to improvise, for example using an F for E (position 3), breaking an E to F, and a K to make Y (position 10).



position 3 - F for E



position 10 - broken K for Y