

Prince George - Pre-1911 Visits to Gibraltar

As Rear Admiral the Duke of York and Cornwall, Prince George and the Duchess, his wife Princess Mary of Teck, visited Gibraltar twice before ascending to the throne in 1910:

- for two days on 20th March 1901 as part of their Empire Tour on board HMS Ophir
- for two days on 30th April 1906 on their way back from India on board HMS Renown.

Whilst much was made of the Empire Tour to Australia including their Highnesses' visits to Gibraltar in the periodicals of the day such as The Gibraltar Chronicle, The Sketch, and Illustrated London News, there was little in the way of philatelic or other souvenirs produced to celebrate their visit. It was not until Prince George succeeded the throne as George V on the death of his father, King Edward VII, on 6th May 1910 that the fascination really took hold.

King George V in Gibraltar – 1911-2

King George V and Queen Mary's first official visit to Gibraltar took place on 11th November 1911 in the Royal Yacht Medina, on their way to the Delhi Durbar to be crowned as Emperor and Empress of India. This visit lasted just under two days but did allow time for a number of ceremonies and celebrations, including the presentation of new Colours to the Staffordshire Regiment, shown to the right in one of a series of postcards printed by Benzaquen & Co to commemorate the visit.



Figure 1. 1911 Postcard with caption "Act of giving new colours by H.M. King George to the Staffordshire"



Figure 2. 1911 Postcard with caption "The King and Queen driving through Church Street".

A second card in the set, shown on the left, shows the King and Queen driving through "Church Street" – now Main Street.

The Royal couple returned from Delhi to Gibraltar on 30th January 1912. Again the visit was brief, this time with little fanfare and no public engagements due to the passing away of their son-in-law, the Duke of Fife, husband of their daughter Victoria.

KGV Postal Stationery 1912

Like the first definitive stamps shown below, postal stationery was issued on 17th July 1912. However, the activities for the design and approval for both commenced much earlier. On the left can be seen a proof of the two pence registration die



Figure 3. Proof of the 1912 2d registration die.

showing the head of King George V on laid paper dated 24 MAY. 12.

On the right is a used version of the same value as the die cancelled with the rare South District cancellation.

On the right is a used version of the same value as the die cancelled with the rare South District cancellation.



Figure 4. A rare South District cancellation on a 1917 registered cover from Gibraltar to Bisley Camp, Brookwood, Surrey UK.



Figure 5. Only known used example of RP12 (K).

The unique cover shown above is the only known example of a size K registered letter from this period:

- Postal stationery: Registered letter RP12 (K) size 285mm x 152mm (11¼" x 6½")
- Adhesives: Block of six SG77 1d adhesives
- Post marks:
 - Gibraltar registered oval cancellations "GIBRALTAR/9 30 AM/19 DE 13/REGISTERED"
 - Malvern registered oval receiving mark "REGISTERED/16/24 DE 13/MALVERN"
 - Malvern forwarding CDS postmark "MALVERN/9.15.PM/DE 25/13/1"
 - Oxford registered oval receiving mark "REGISTERED/6.30.PM/26 DE 13/OXFORD"
- Wax Seal: Rounded triangular seal showing "DC" and an angled 3-pointed crown

It was sent from Gibraltar to Malvern in Worcestershire on the 19th December 1913 with instructions to forward if the recipient, a Mrs. Wicks, had left – which she had. It was forwarded by the Malvern post office to Oxford on December 25th – so poor Mrs. Wicks received her Christmas present late!

KGV Postage Stamps – First Definitive Issue – July 1912

It was not until 17th July 1912 that the first postage stamps depicting King George V were issued in Gibraltar. These were generally single or two similar colours printed on multi-crown CA (stands for Crown Agents) watermarked paper. There are some nice varieties, especially in the colours.



Figure 6. SGw8 Multi-crown CA

Figure 7. SG76s-85s - the 1912-24 specimen set ½d to £1

Indeed, whilst Gibbons lists just four colour varieties of both ink and paper for the 1/- black and green (SG81), in fact Chris Moore proposed that, due to shortages of both ink and paper during the First World War, there are at least 7 variations. On further investigation of the SG81 1/-, there appear many more than this. A study paper showing four different types of paper and seven different shades of ink is to be published on this in the near future by the author.

The ½d to 1/- stamps are around 20mm x 24mm, with the 2/- to £1 values being 24mm x 41mm.

A booklet similar in design to that issued in 1906 was issued with this set, containing four sheets of six ½d blue-green (SG76) and two sheets of six 1d carmine-red (SG77), so 2/- in total. However, the booklets were priced at 2/0½d - a surcharge of ½d per booklet. Perhaps this is why they did not sell well.



Figure 8. One of only five known 1912 booklets.



Figure 9. A booklet sheet of six ½d stamps.

There is very little information available about the ordering of these booklets other than apparently stocks ran out in 1921 and no more were ordered. Only five examples of these have been recorded by the Gibraltar Study Circle.

World War I - 1914 - The First Gibraltar Banknotes

It was feared that the news of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 might cause a run on the main banks in Gibraltar. In order to forestall a major calamity, the Gibraltar Government created the first Gibraltar banknotes under emergency wartime legislation, Ordinance 10 of 1914, in denominations of 2/-, 10/-, £1, £5 and £50. These were not legal tender as are normal banknotes, but promissory notes to be exchanged for legal tender at a later date to be set by the Government. Because of this, most of these notes were indeed later exchanged & destroyed, making them exceedingly rare.



Figure 10. A rare emergency issue Series A 2/-, printed on one side only. Note the use of the Spanish "Dos Chelines" meaning "Two Shillings"

World War I - 1918 - War Tax

On 15th April 1918 the Government, having decided there was a need to raise additional money for the war effort, issued a ½d "WAR TAX" overprint to be used in addition to the actual postal rate on all post. The initial run of these were overprinted locally in Gibraltar. It was not until June the next delivery from the UK arrived including new overprints. These are catalogued as typically thicker and heavier overprints on a darker green, however, used examples of the thicker heavier overprint are known to exist showing dates of May 1918, disproving this catalogue statement.

As with the original SG76 ½d, there are many known varieties including watermarks. This example has the watermark inverted and reversed.



Figure 11. WAR TAX overprint (SG86y) Wmk inverted & reversed.

KGVI Postage Stamps – Second Definitive Issue – from February 1921



Figure 12. Multi-script CA (SGw9).

A second definitive set began to be issued in 1921, with various new stamps and values being issued between February 1921 and June 1924. The new values were the 1½d chestnut and the "3 PENCE" bright blue. The £1 stamp was omitted this time. The remaining values were re-issued in very similar colours, making them difficult to differentiate from the earlier set. The main difference is the change in watermark from multi-crown CA to multi-script CA (see left).

KGV Postage Stamps – Third Definitive Issue – from October 1925

A third issue of higher value definitive stamps from 1/- upwards was issued between October 1925 and January 1929. The values and/or colours were different from previous issues, but had the same multi-script CA watermark. The new set included the first £5 stamp issued by Gibraltar. This was followed in 1930 by the single release of a new 3d stamp, inscribed “THREE PENCE”, in ultramarine.



Figure 13. King George V high value definitive issue specimens SG102-108.

KGV Postage Stamps – First Pictorial Issue – “The Rock Issue” 1931

The first pictorial set of Gibraltar stamps was issued in 1931 and became known as “The Rock Issue” for obvious reasons. Two sizes of perforation were issued - the original set had the more rare 13½ x 14 perforations, whilst the later 1931-3 re-issued stamps had the more common 14 x 14 perforations.



Figure 14. SG110-3 – The 1931 “Rock Set” specimens 3d

The 1935 Jubilee Celebrations

As with the rest of the Empire, Gibraltar celebrated the King’s Silver Jubilee in 1935 with the issue of the “Windsor Castle” Silver Jubilee issue, famous for the flagstaff varieties. As the entire Empire’s stamps were printed using the same plates, these common flaws found across the entire omnibus set are well documented – and often highly over-priced.

What is not so well documented is the movement of the Windsor Castle vignettes, which travel from side to side as well as up and down as shown on the next page – the top vignette is to the upper left compared to the bottom vignette which is to the lower right.



Figure 15. Windsor Castle “on the move”

These vignette movement varieties are much more common – almost every sheet moved slightly – and some are difficult to see. However, if you imagine putting them into one of the old fashioned flick-books such as used to be printed with dozens of pages showing an acrobat in a slightly different position on each page, one can see that, without too much difficulty, it will be possible to make Windsor Castle walk around in a circle☺!

Another rare item from the 1935 Jubilee celebrations is the Gibraltar 1935 Jubilee Medal, shown on the right.

In England, many local authorities issued such medals to people deemed worthy and such medals come up for sale every now and again. However, only two or three of these medals are known with the Gibraltar bar at the top.



Figure 16. The Gibraltar Jubilee Medal

King George V in the Modern Era



Figure 17. 1993 Crown of King George V.

This fascination continues right up to the present day, with Gibraltar continuing to celebrate the life and achievements of King George V with stamps and coins (See 1993 crown to left) to commemorate such things as his creation of the Royal “House of Windsor”, to move away from the German name of the Royal Family during World War I.

Of particular interest is the set of stamps issued in 2010 celebrating the centenary of his ascension to the throne in 1910. The set was designed by Stephen Perera and the artwork was painted by Martin Hargreaves and was entirely devoted to King George and his life and includes a unique picture of The King partaking of his favourite hobby – philately!



Figure 18. The 2010 commemoratives of the centenary of King George V's succession.



Figure 19. Original artwork for the 10p stamp.

The 42p stamp shows a unique picture, believed to be the only known depiction of King George V engaged in his favourite hobby, philately. George was elected honorary vice-president of The Philatelic Society, London – now The Royal – in 1893 and President in 1896. He became the first Royal Patron of the Society on his accession to the throne in 1910.

Although there had been royal philatelists as far back as 1864, Victoria's second son Alfred was considered the first serious royal collector. George was one of the foremost philatelists of his day, along with President Roosevelt. His collection was augmented by inheriting his father Edward VII's collection, which Edward had purchased from his brother Alfred. When joined with George's own collection, it became what is now the Royal Philatelic Collection – the largest and most complete in the world.

This painting for the 10p stamp shows King George V, Queen Mary and their family in the gardens of York Cottage. This “cottage”, originally called the ‘Bachelor's Cottage’, was built by King Edward VII in the grounds of the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk and given to George as a wedding present in 1893. George had six children; Edward Prince of Wales, Albert (later King George VI), Mary Princess Royal, Henry, George and John. The absence of Prince John and the relative age of Prince George (front centre, b1902) would indicate the date being around 1905.

Painted on cartridge paper measures 239 x 241mm. Whilst not the most accurate or detailed painting, it was detailed sufficiently for the purpose of reducing to the 40 x 31mm required for the stamp.



Figure 20. The original artwork for the 42p stamp.



Figure 21. The original artwork for the 44p stamp.

The final stamp, the £2, gives an indication of the King's great love of the sea. Shown in his uniform as Admiral of the Fleet to which he was appointed on 5th May 1910, the King is standing on the fore-deck of a battleship between the two super-firing 15" muzzles of the lower for'ard turret. The ship depicted is believed to be HMS Valiant, one of the Queen Elizabeth class of super-dreadnought battleships launched November 1914.



Figure 23. Picture postcard of HMS Valiant in Gibraltar

The 44p stamp shows King George V inspecting Infantry from horseback. This is believed to be a representation of the review of the Infantry carried out in France by George V whilst visiting President Poincare of France. The troops were on their way as reinforcements at the Battle of Gallipoli (25th April 1915 – 9th January 1916) in October 1915 just before the King was thrown from his horse and permanently damaged his hip on 28th October that year (*sources: Los Angeles Herald 29th October 1915 and Sunday Telegraph 30th October 1915*). Odd that the American papers carried the story before the British papers.



Figure 22. Original artwork for the £2 stamp.

The similarity between the artwork above and the postcard showing HMS Valiant visiting Gibraltar on the left can clearly be seen.

There were two other paintings in the set that were not adopted for use as stamps.. The first, showing the four monarchs of the House of Windsor, was a totally different shape and not just to do with King George V.



Figure 24. Unadopted artwork - four Monarchs of the House of Windsor.

The second was rejected for copyright reasons – it is a copy of the official Coronation portrait painted by Sir Luke Fildes in 1911.



Figure 25. Unadopted artwork - copied from the official Coronation portrait.

1912 to 2012 – Coming Full Circle

Talking of postcards, 100 years after they were originally published in 1912 to celebrate King George V's visit to Gibraltar, two of the postcard introduced at the beginning of this article were used to create stamps in the "Old Views of Gibraltar Series II" 2012 Issue. One of the original postcards was even used for the first day cover picture.



Figure 26. FDC of "Old Views of Gibraltar Series II" with the 30p stamp and the cover picture taken from the original postcards.



Figure 27. Series II miniature sheet showing the Staffordshire Regiment on the 10p stamp.

Shown below is the miniature sheet of this issue.

The archway depicted in the right margin of the miniature sheet is the Triumphal Arch erected for the visit of King George V to Gibraltar in 1911.

And Finally – 1917 to 2017...

Looping back to the unadopted artwork of Her Majesty standing in front of the three Kings, here they are again from 2017 – the four monarchs of the House of Windsor, created by King George V to detract from the Germanic name and antecedents of the Royal Family during the First World War. The coloured line around each stamp is the tartan designed specifically for each monarch.

Below is the first day cover from the 2010 Centenary of Accession of King George V with the stamp from this 2017 set showing King George V – two sets seven years apart on one FDC **all about King George V, King and Emperor.**



Figure 28. 2017, the centenary of the creation of the House of Windsor.



Figure 29. A unique King George V combination cover.