

# THE MAFEKING BLUES 1900

## Introduction

The Siege of Mafeking during the Boer War in the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) started on October 13, 1899, two days after the declaration of war by the Government of the Transvaal Republic. It lasted 217 days, having been ended on May 17, 1900. Due to shortage of stamps and in order to assure postal operations during the Siege, the commanding officer and defender of the town Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell ordered at the outset the overprint of the existing entire supply of stamps with the "MAFEKING BESIEGED" overprint together with new values and later the issue of two new stamps for local postal use only.

The "Mafeking Blues", as these two new values of 3d and 1d were called, consisted of two designs (Colonel Baden-Powell and Sgt Major Warner Goodyear, Troop-leader of the Mafeking Cadet Corps, respectively). The first of the values to appear (Baden-Powell 3d small format or "head" stamp) was officially issued on (Monday) April 9, 1900 but in fact circulated three days earlier, on (Friday) the 6<sup>th</sup>. Since this format did not give justice to the design, it was decided that a larger format of the same value be produced. It is generally accepted that April 10 is the first day of its issue. That same day the other value (Goodyear 1d or the "bicycle" stamp) was issued as well to honour the boys of the Cadet Corps. A first larger and horizontal design of the "bicycle" stamp was rejected. The ferrypress process was used to produce both values.

## Plan of the Exhibit

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# THE MAFEKING BLUE BADEN POWELL 3d STAMP

## SMALL FORMAT

The 3d small format "head" stamp illustrating Col. Baden-Powell's bust was designed by the paymaster Capt. Herbert Greener, photographed and printed by photographer David Taylor and issued on April 6, 1900



Three 3d pale and deep blue on blue small format stamps on horizontally laid paper without watermark



3d Pale blue on blue small format horizontal corner pair on horizontally laid paper without watermark



3d Small format pale blue on blue tied to cover by MAFEKING C.G.H. AP 10, 1900 cds, addressed to Thomas Gardner of the Bechuanaland Rifles at the Town Hall

# THE MAFEKING BLUE BADEN POWELL 3d STAMP

## SMALL FORMAT

3d Pale and deep blue on blue small format stamps on horizontally laid paper without watermark franked with the MAFEKING C.G.H. cds



Saturday AP 7 1900



Tuesday AP 10 1900



Wednesday AP 11 1900



Holy Thursday AP 12 1900

(e)



Holy Thursday AP 12 1900



Good Friday AP 13 1900



Thursday AP 19 1900



Sunday MY 13 1900

## THE MAFEKING BLUE BADEN POWELL 3d STAMP

### LARGE FORMAT

The 3d large format “head” stamp illustrating Col. Baden-Powell’s bust as well, was produced to give justice to the design



3d Deep blue on blue large format on horizontally laid paper with the intersecting vertical line

It was issued on April 10, but the earliest reported cancellation dates April 12, 1900



Good Friday AP 13 1900



Friday AP 27 1900

(e)



Monday MY 14 1900

3d Pale and deep blue on blue large format stamps on horizontally laid paper with the intersecting line franked with the MAFEKING C.G.H. cds

## THE MAFEKING BLUE VARIETIES

BADEN POWELL 3d STAMP LARGE FORMAT

THE CRACKED PLATE VARIETY



Position 6

3d Baden Powell large format light blue stamp with cracked plate variety tied to cover front by MAFEKING C.G.H. MY 2, 1900 cds, addressed to Colonel R.S.S. Baden Powell at his HQs in Hotel Dixon

*The only known of this position on cover (front)*

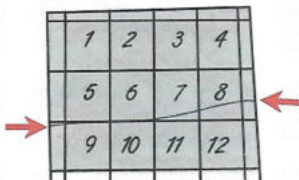


Position 9



Position 10

The accidental dropping by the printer of the Baden Powell 3d large format glass photographic plate caused this spectacular variety on five stamps of the sheet



The five positions of the crack are: 6, 7, 8 and 9, 10

## THE MAKEING BLUE WARNER GOODYEAR 1d STAMP

The 1d stamp illustrating Sgt-Major Warner Goodyear was designed by the medical officer Dr. William A. Hayes.

It was photographed and printed by photographer David Taylor



*Photo of the essay for the 1d horizontal format*

This first design was rejected as too elaborate and thus it had to be reworked by Dr. W.A. Hayes

The 1d stamp with the finally approved design illustrating Sgt-Major Warner Goodyear was issued on April 10, 1900



Three 1d pale blue on blue stamps on horizontally laid paper with the intersecting vertical line



Two 1d deep blue on blue stamps on horizontally laid paper with the intersecting vertical line

## THE MAFEKING BLUE WARNER GOODYEAR 1d STAMP

There were three negatives produced which formed the three printing plates that were used in the production of the stamps, each consisting of 12 stamps



Plate I



Plate II



Plate III

A total of approximately 800 sheets were printed:

8% from plate I  
42% from plate II  
50% from plate III



1d Deep blue on blue tied to mutilated cover by MAFEKING C.G.H. MY 9, 1900 cds, addressed to Town Guard member (R.) Brazer at his house in Molopo Road

## THE MAFEKING BLUE WARNER GOODYEAR 1d STAMP

1d Pale and deep blue on blue stamps on horizontally laid paper without watermark franked with the MAFEKING C.G.H. cds



Tuesday MY 1 1900



Thursday MY 3 1900



Thursday MY 17 1900  
*Last Day of the Siege*



1d Pale blue on blue horizontal pair on horizontally laid paper without watermark  
Franked Saturday MY 12 1900



1d Pale blue on blue upper right corner marginal stamp on horizontally laid paper without watermark  
Franked Saturday AP 28 1900



(e)

1d Deep and pale blue on blue bottom left and right corner marginal stamps on horizontally laid paper without watermark  
Franked Tuesday MY 8 and Thursday MY 10 1900 respectively



## THE MAFEKING BLUE ERRORS AND VARIETIES

### BADEN POWELL 3d STAMP SMALL FORMAT



The "white spot" or "ball flaw"  
variety (position 11)

Upper right corner with  
double perforation at the edge

*Due to a piece of dirt adhered to the emulsion on the glass plate*

### WARNER GOODYEAR 1d STAMP

The Mafeking Blues were  
perforated by Townshend and Son  
with treadle line perforation



Because they operated under  
harsh wartime conditions, some  
errors were made

Perforation shift



(e)

The "broken tablet" or "broken plate" variety (plate III, pos. 34)

*Resulted from the build-up of emulsion on the bottom edge of the third glass plate*



Plate III, pos. 35



Plate III, position 36

# THE MAFEKING BLUES PAPER WATERMARK AND FORGERIES

## THE PAPER

The Mafeking Blues were produced on sheets of laid paper with the watermark "Oceana FINE" appearing once on each sheet



Representation of the laid paper with the intersecting vertical lines



Two 3d small format pale and deep blue on blue stamps on horizontally laid paper with the intersecting vertical line  
*Franked AP 19, 1900*

## THE WATERMARK

OCEANA  
FINE

Reduced representation of the watermark



Part of watermark "O" on 1d  
*Mint, perforation 12*

On upper left corner (on rev.)

Plate 2, position 4

(e)

## THE FORGERIES

Forgeries are known to exist both of siege stamps as well as cancels



Well executed forgery



Forged cds cancellation

## THE MAFEKING SIEGE CANCELLATIONS

To keep the moral of the defenders high during the potentially long siege, Col. Baden-Powell thought of paramount importance to secure regular contact between the town and the forts that ringed it through an uninterrupted mail service. The proper usage of the 3d rate was for delivery between the town and the forts, while that of the 1d was for in-town delivery

### TYPES OF CANCELS

At the time of the siege there were three active cancelling devices in Mafeking



Telegraphic  
MY 26, 1900

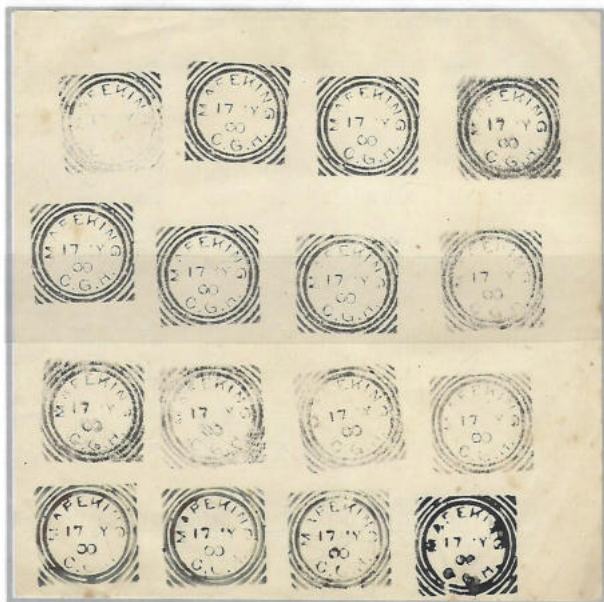


Squared Circle  
OC 30, 1899



Circular Date Stamp  
FE 30, 1900

*Above right are shown two cancels with the known date errors*



Examples of the Squared Circle Cancel forgery

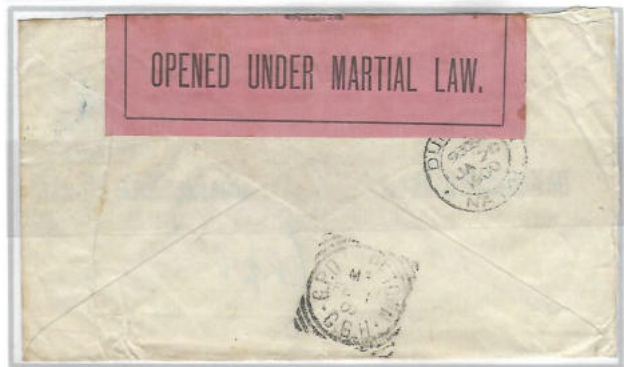
## THE BRITISH CENSORSHIP

### THE CENSORSHIP LABEL



The censored correspondence was sealed by a pink "OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW" label topped with the royal crown and the initials V R (Victoria Regina)

3d Small format on piece with remains of the pink censorship label



British censorship of correspondence to and from the Republics began at Durban as soon as the war was declared, first recorded from October 12, 1899

## THE MAFEKING BLUES SIEGE CALENDAR

*The Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell small format 3d stamp  
April 6 to 30, 1900*

There are no cancellations known for Palm and Easter Sundays 8 and 15,  
as well as Sundays the 22 and 29



(e)

Friday 6

*Only five are known to exist*



Saturday 7



Monday 9



Tuesday 10



Wednesday 11



Holy Thursday 12



Good Friday 13



Saturday 14



Monday 16



Tuesday 17



Wednesday 18



Thursday 19



Friday 20



Saturday 21



Monday 23



Friday 27



Saturday 28



Monday 30

*200<sup>th</sup> Day of the Siege*

## THE MAFEKING BLUES SIEGE CALENDAR

*The Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell small format 3d stamp  
May 1 to 17, 1900*

There are no cancellations known for Sunday the 6th



Tuesday 1



Wednesday 2



Thursday 3



Saturday 5



Monday 7



Tuesday 8



Wednesday 9



Thursday 10



Friday 11



Saturday 12



Sunday 13



Tuesday 15



Wednesday 16



(e)

Thursday 17  
*Last Day of the Siege*



## THE MAFEKING BLUES SIEGE CALENDAR

*The Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell large format 3d stamp*

April, 1900

Only the following dates are known to have 3d large format stamps cancelled during the month of April: 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 30



Holy Thursday 12



Good Friday 13



Saturday 14



Friday 20

(e)



Wednesday 25



Thursday 26

(e)



Friday 27



Saturday 28

*The Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell large format 3d stamp*

May 1 to 17, 1900

There are no cancellations known for Sunday the 6th



Wednesday 2

(e)



Thursday 3



Thursday 10



Friday 11

(e)



Saturday 12



Monday 14

*The Cadet Sergeant-Major Warner Goodyear 1d stamp*

April 10 to 30, 1900

There are no cancellations known for Easter Sunday the 15th and Sundays 22 and 29



Good Friday 13



Tuesday 24



Friday 27



Saturday 28



Monday 30  
20<sup>th</sup> Day of the Siege

## THE MAFEKING BLUES SIEGE CALENDAR

*The Cadet Sergeant-Major Warner Goodyear 1d stamp  
May 1 to 17, 1900*

There are no cancellations known for Sunday the 6th



Tuesday 1



Wednesday 2



Thursday 3



Friday 4



Saturday 5



Monday 7



Tuesday 8



Wednesday 9



Thursday 10



Friday 11



Saturday 12



Sunday 13



Monday 14



Tuesday 15



Wednesday 16



Thursday 17

*Last Day of the Siege*