

# *A REVIEW OF PLATE 5*

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### **Introduction**

One of the perennial problems faced by catalogue editors is that knowledge in specialised fields rarely stands still - particularly when an editor has to cater for numerous such fields of specialised expertise. However eventually there comes a time when advances in knowledge need to be recognised, and anomalies, misconceptions, and sometimes even outright errors, need to be corrected, simply in order for the catalogue concerned to continue to be perceived as 'authoritative'. It should be said here that in some cases, dubious contributions by subsequent authorities can cast doubt on the correctness of a catalogue listing, and cause unnecessary confusion. It is helpful if these can be shown to be incorrect. This is not a one-way process!

Die 1, Alphabet I, Plate 5 of the Line-engraved issues, printed in Black during 1840, and in Red-brown from 1841, is one such case. It is immensely complex because the plate underwent no fewer than four (and arguably five) repairs during its period of use, with some units being repaired no less than three (and possibly even four) times, creating up to four (and possibly five) different 'states' of the letterings concerned, with some of those states known in both Black and Red. The problem has always been to identify the states, and thus the repair concerned, for any given lettering. The vast majority are generally agreed: however many anomalies remain. Clearly some of those anomalies will remain, inviting further research and discoveries, and provoking debate for the future. However I will try in this paper to remove as many of the more glaring discrepancies and errors as I can, correct some of the more obvious anomalies, and indeed present some new discoveries.

### **The Repairs**

Whilst specialists in this field will be well acquainted with this information, and it is indeed available in the listings for Plate 5 in SG Specialised Catalogue, Volume 1 (Queen Victoria), it may nevertheless be found helpful (as a point of reference for the following detailed information on each lettering) to have a brief summary available here. The vast majority (though not all) of the repairs affected the left-hand side of the plate, in the vertical 'A' to 'E' rows.

Repairs during the life of the Black printings:

**First repair:** Possibly in **October 1840** (earliest known use **22 November 1840**), using a transfer roller with blank corner squares, causing compression of the engraved lines of the check-letters and corner stars, and resultant thinning of the final printed version of these impressions.

**Second repair:** Possibly in **December 1840** (earliest known use **21 January 1841**), transfer roller once again with blank corners. Further compression caused, and corner stars and letters thinner still and fainter on printed impressions.

**Third ('Provisional') repair:** In the latter part of **January 1841** (earliest known use **6 March 1841**), and once again using a transfer roller with blank corners. Further compression and thinning caused. Some authorities consider that this repair was a 'split' repair, taking place over a period of several days, during the course of which printing in Black ceased. Unfortunately, unlike other plates in use at this time (notably Plates 8 and 9) for which substantive evidence for a split repair exists, the evidence for a split Provisional repair in Plate 5 is entirely circumstantial, relying entirely on the fact that certain repaired impressions known in Red have not yet been seen in the corresponding state in Black. The rarity of these 'Provisional' printings in Black, however, is such that the fact that nobody has 'seen' a particular impression must be regarded as tenuous evidence to adduce as 'proof' that they do not exist, nor have ever existed. Where at least one authority states (or implies) that the relevant state in Black exists, though others may not have seen it, the lettering concerned will not be referred to below, as the listing in the SG Specialised catalogue would be unaffected. The catalogue currently makes no reference to a 'split' repair, and all letterings subject to the Provisional repair are presumed by the editors to exist in the relevant state in both Black and Red (and listed accordingly). This in my view is a situation that should be addressed (see **Conclusions and Recommendations** below).

Repair affecting Red printings only:

**Fourth repair:** Possibly in **April 1841** (but earliest known use surprisingly not until **4 September 1841**), using a transfer roller with stars in the upper corner squares, but blank letter-squares. This is a diagnostic feature of this repair, as it resulted in further thinning of the check-letters, but complete restoration (and indeed in many cases, obvious strengthening) of the corner stars. Particularly notable is the condition of the SE long ray of the NE corner star, which had become extremely attenuated (and in some cases almost completely invisible) as a result of earlier repairs. As a result of this final repair, this ray was completely (and very obviously) restored.

Knowledge of the typical features of these various repairs is essential for the correct identification of the various states of the repaired impressions.

### **Anomalous Repaired Impressions**

What follows is a list of those letterings which in my view require updating with current information, in order to amend or correct the position as it appears in the most recent SG Specialised listings, or to rectify confusion caused by conflicting statements in other authorities.

'AA': SG list as having undergone a single repair, at the first (1840) operation. Osborne and Statham agree, Osborne noting a thinned NE corner star, and thinned right letter 'A'. However Winston Hollins has a single on cover dated 23 October 1841 (illustrated lower right) which he suggests may be from a late repair, pointing out that it has a strong NE star and a short burr line in the upper right margin. This is not visible in the Black in State 2 with the large right margin (top row right). I agree, and would add that the left letter 'A' of the new State 3 shows slight thinning in comparison with the State 2s, and furthermore shows marked strengthening of the NW star. This lettering therefore exists in States 1 and 2 in Black, and 2 and 3 in Red:



State 1                      State 2                      State 2                      New State 3

(Pictures from Winston Hollins)

'CC': This unit was repaired three times, at the first and second (1840) repairs, and at one other. The SG Specialised listing indicates that the final repair was carried out at the Provisional (third) repair of early 1841. However, a later state red print in my possession clearly indicates a product of the fourth (1841) repair, with the SE long ray of the NE star being clearly stronger:



State 1                      State 3                      State 3                      State 4

Winston Hollins agrees:



State 1                      State 2                      State 3                      State 3                      State 4

If State 4 in Black were found to exist, this final state red printing would be a new State 5. However, Osborne, Statham and Stone had not seen State 4 in Black, and both Statham and Stone place the State 4 in the fourth (1841) repair. It is therefore my view that this is undoubtedly correct, and the SG Specialised listing should be amended accordingly.

'DD': SG, Statham and Osborne list this unit as having been repaired twice, at the two early (1840) repairs, creating States 1, 2 and 3 in Black, but only State 3 in Red. Stone however shows a third repair, at the fourth (1841) operation, creating a State 4 in Red. This is in fact correct, as can be seen from the strong SE long ray of the NE star in the copies of State 4 illustrated below - a clear change from the attenuated state it had reached in State 3. In addition, it maybe that the right 'D' has been very lightly recut, as it appears very slightly firmer. The top row is from my collection, and includes a 'DC-DD' pair in State 3; I am indebted to John McCulloch for the second row centre matched pair, illustrating State 2 in Black and State 3 in Red. It was Winston Hollins who first noted this repair, and informed Stone - the stamp concerned is illustrated bottom right:



State 1

State 2

State 3

State 4

‘EA’: This unit was repaired three times according to SG, at the first (1840) repair, the Provisional repair, and the fourth (1841) repair. This would imply that the 1d Black exists in States 1, 2 and 3, and the 1d Red in States 2, 3 and 4. Osborne and Stone, however, state that the repairs involved were the first and second (1840) repairs, and the fourth (1841) repair, which implies States 1, 2 and 3 in Black, but only 3 and 4 in Red. (Statham omits the second repair altogether, which I suspect may be a typographical error.) If State 2 exists in Red, it would be the rare Pre-Provisional printing: I do not have it, and no authority that I have consulted has seen it. It would therefore seem that Osborne’s and Stone’s opinions should prevail.

‘EB’: This unit was repaired three times, correctly listed by SG as first (1840), Provisional, and fourth (1841) repair. Stone states that the second repair was at the second (1840) operation rather than at the Provisional repair. However, the existence of State 2 in Red (see below), the pre-Provisional printing, proves Stone incorrect, though Osborne had also clearly not seen State 2 in Red. Statham omits the second repair altogether, which again may be a typographical error:



State 1

State 2

State 3

State 4

‘ED’: Correctly listed by SG as having been repaired three times, at both 1840 operations, and finally at the last (1841) repair, creating States 1, 2 and 3 in Black, and States 3 and 4 in Red. Statham omits the second (1840) repair, and therefore proposes States 1 and 2 only in Black, and States 2 and 3 in Red, but this is clearly incorrect.

‘EE’: SG list this in a second state from the fourth (1841) repair. Osborne, Statham and Stone make no mention of a second state of this unit, and nobody I know has it, or has seen it. Winston Hollins notes that he has seen many reds labelled ‘State 2’, but all were State 1. In the absence of a confirmed State 2 in Red, therefore, I would suggest that the status of this repair be reviewed.

‘EH’: This unit was repaired once, at the fourth (1841) repair, illustrated by Stone (see below), and confirmed by Statham. Osborne omits, as do SG. Despite my State 2 being a poor copy, the thinned letter ‘H’ is clearly visible, and a strong NE corner star is visible in Stone’s illustration:



St. 1

St. 2



State 1

State 2

'FA': This unit was repaired twice (though Statham omits the second repair - another typographical error?). SG state that the operations involved were the first (1840) and fourth (1841) repairs, giving States 1 and 2 in Black, and States 2 and 3 in Red. Stone, however, illustrates the states of this lettering, and I have State 3 in Red (see below). It is clear from the illustrations of State 3 that the SE long ray of the NE star is weak, so this cannot be a product of the fourth (1841) repair as listed by SG. This must therefore be a product of the Provisional repair. No authority however (including Osborne, who also gives three states of this unit) has seen State 3 in Black. Although I cannot rule out its existence (whether past or present), it is possible that this was a unit subject to the second half of a 'split' Provisional repair. This would give States 1 and 2 in Black, and States 2 (pre-Provisional) and 3 in Red - the illustration of State 2 is from Winston Hollins:



St. 1

St. 2

St. 3



State 2

State 3

'GB': Repaired once only. SG list this under the fourth (1841) repair, but the State 2 in Red (see below) clearly shows weakness of the SE long ray of the NE star, and it cannot therefore be a product of the fourth repair. Osborne, Statham and Stone all place this in the Provisional repair, but there is no record of a State 2 in Black, so this unit is another possible candidate for the second half of a 'split' repair:



Both State 1

All State 2

'GC': Repaired once only. Like 'GB' above, SG place this in the fourth (1841) repair, but this would again appear to be incorrect. Though Osborne states that the NE star was not weaker in State 2, the illustration of State 2 below clearly shows the star as weakened in comparison with the three examples of State 1. Both Statham and Stone place this in the second half of a 'split' Provisional repair, and there is no record of a State 2 in Black:



Both State 1

State 1

State 2

'GE': Repaired once only, at the fourth (1841) repair, as correctly listed by SG. Stone indicates the second half of a split Provisional repair, but the SE long ray of the NE star is strong, confirming the later repair.



(From Winston Hollins)

'HB': Repaired once only, at the Provisional repair, as listed by SG. Stone puts this repair at the first half of a 'split' repair, so presumably had seen State 2 in Black. Neither Osborne nor Statham had seen State 2, and there is no other record of a State 2 in Black. However, I see no reason to alter the current SG listing, and it may be that Osborne and Statham were incorrect. I cannot confirm either way, as I do not have examples of the pre-Provisional State 1 in Red, or State 2 in Black.

'HC': Repaired twice, at the Provisional repair, and also (a new State 3 discovery) at the fourth (1841) repair. Winston Hollins has State 2 in Black, which confirms the position of the first repair. This produces State 1 and 2 (Provisional printing) in Black, and States 1 (pre-Provisional), 2 and 3 in Red. SG list a single repair only, giving State 2 in Red under the fourth (1841) repair: this is now known to be incorrect. The illustrations below clearly show thinning of the NE star in State 2 (so this cannot be from the fourth repair), and in my new State 3 further thinning of the check-letters, but restoration of the NE star:



(Winston Hollins)



State 2 (New) State 3

'HH': Not repaired. SG correctly do not list any repair, but Stone reports, and illustrates it. In fact his illustration of 'State 2' is of Plate 11, showing the constant variety illustrated by Statham (lower left leg of 'H' weak), which is also clearly visible in Nissen:



St.1

St.2

(Illustrations from Stone)

'HK': Repaired once only. Not listed by SG. Both Statham and Stone suggest the fourth (1841) repair, Osborne does not list it. Stone illustrates it, and although his illustration suggests a weakness of the SE long ray of the NE star, indicating the Provisional repair, no authority reports a State 2 in Black, and Winston Hollins believes this is a product of the final (1841) repair. His illustration of State 2 (below) tends to confirm this:



St.1

St.2

(From Stone)



State 1

State 1

State 2

(Winston Hollins)

'IA': Repaired once only. Correctly listed by SG under the fourth (1841) repair, Statham and Stone confirm, though Osborne does not list. Winston Hollins' State 2 below shows strong NE star:



State 1

State 2

'IB': Repaired once only. SG correctly list under the fourth (1841) repair, supported by Statham. Osborne does not list, but Stone suggests the second half of a split Provisional repair. Winston Hollins' illustration of State 2 however shows a strong NE star, confirming Stone incorrect, and SG and Statham right:



State 1

State 2

**'JB'**: Possibly repaired once, at the Provisional repair, according to both SG and Stone. However, both Osborne and Statham omit, and no authority (other than Stone?) has seen it in anything other than State 1. I have it in State 1 in Red on a December 1841 cover, a considerable eleven months after the Provisional repair. The status of this repair should be regarded with caution, and perhaps should be reviewed by SG.

**'LA'**: Believed to have been repaired once only. SG state this was a product of the fourth (1841) repair, which I believe is incorrect, as my State 2 in Red has a slightly weakened SE long ray of the NE star, which would rule out the fourth repair. Statham states that this was a product of the first half of a split Provisional repair, so had presumably seen State 2 in Black. Osborne and Stone clearly had not, and Stone suggests the second half of a split repair. If Statham is correct, this unit exists in State 1 and 2 (Provisional issue) in Black, and State 1 (pre-Provisional) and 2 in Red. Winston Hollins believes this may be still a product of the fourth (1841) repair, though I confess that I remain unconvinced. Winston's illustration of State 2 in Red (bottom right) in my view seems also to show a slightly weakened NE star (though it is admittedly marginal). If Statham had seen State 2 in Black, the Provisional repair would be confirmed. More information required:



State 1

State 2



State 1

State 1

State 2

(Winston Hollins)

**'MA'**: Currently listed by SG as having been repaired once only, at the Provisional repair. Osborne, Statham and Stone agree. Known to exist therefore in States 1 and 2 (Provisional) in Black, and 1 (pre-Provisional) and 2 in Red.. Both stars are markedly thinned as a result of the Provisional repair, though the sideline of the NE star, weak in State 1, has been restored. Winston Hollins however has a red print (top right) showing the NE star considerably stronger, and he suggests a further repair, at the final (1841) operation. I agree, and would point out further that the outer frame-line of the NE corner is fainter than in State 2, the letter 'A' is slightly thinner, and furthermore the NW star has also been markedly strengthened:



State 1

State 2

New State 3 (above)

(Winston Hollins)

**'NA'**: I believe this unit was repaired twice, at the second (1840) operation, and also at the fourth (1841) repair. SG list only the first operation, stating at AS28A that 'NA' remained in State 2 'throughout the life of the red printings'. This is in my view incorrect. Stone illustrates three states of 'NA' (taken from Geoffrey Mason - see below), but states that the second operation took place at the first half of a split Provisional repair. His State 3 in Red however appears to show a somewhat strong NE star - though the weaker state of the outside frame-line of the NE corner, and the fainter letter 'N' (in comparison with State 2) suggests to me that a second operation did in fact take place. Stone's attribution of this state to the first half of the Provisional repair begs the question: had he seen State 3 in Black? If he had, his 'State 3' (presumably in Red) as illustrated may in fact be an

unreported State 4. If my assessment is correct, however, this lettering exists in States 1 and 2 only in Black, and States 2 and 3 in Red. Winston Hollins' 'NA's are illustrated below: in fairness he remains unconvinced (as was the late Geoffrey Mason, whose stamps were used by Stone in spite of this) that a third state exists. I believe however that under close examination both corner stars are noticeably strengthened in his two right-hand examples, in comparison with the State 2. Further research is clearly required, but in the interim, amendments are required to SG's listing:



(Winston Hollins)

'OL': Both Statham and Stone state that this unit was repaired at the Provisional operation, though neither had apparently seen State 2 in Black: they suggest the second half of a split repair. Both SG and Osborne ignore altogether. I only have State 1 in Black, and there appears to be no other record of a State 2 in Black or indeed in Red. Winston Hollins' State 1s in Black and Red are illustrated below. Further information is required on this unit, in the form of examples of a second state in either Black or Red (or both). Recommend no change in SG's listing at this time:



Both State 1

(Winston Hollins)

'PA': This is generally considered to have been repaired once only, at the first (1840) repair, and is listed by SG as such. However Winston Hollins suggests a further repair at the Provisional operation. He has drawn to my attention his first copy in Red illustrated below right (top row, number four), pointing out that although this copy exhibits greater plate wear than any of the others, both stars seem somewhat firm. My Red (top row, number three) is very similar. These two Reds and the illustration of 'PA' in Osborne's (page 94d) 'pre-Provisional' large part sheet are remarkably similar, all showing a tiny weakness in the upper right side just below the NE corner visible in the Osborne plate. In addition, the 'P' is much firmer (particularly in my Red) than in the stamps illustrated on the bottom row. These two Reds must therefore be in the Pre-Provisional State 2. Winston's second Black (bottom row, one) however shows weaker stars, and firmer lower left and right frame-lines. The remaining Reds along the bottom row are similar, suggesting a later repair, and a new State 3 of the Provisional printing. I have also now acquired a further Red in a similar state, with very thin corner stars, and a thinner 'P' (not illustrated). It would be desirable to have more evidence of this further repair before recommending any change to current catalogue listings (though a note under AS27A may be considered appropriate):



State 1  
(WH)

State 1 (worn)  
(MNJ)

State 2  
(MNJ)

State 2  
(WH)





All (new) State 3  
(Winston Hollins)

'QA': Repaired once only, at the Provisional repair. Statham suggests that this was at the second half of a split repair, so clearly had not seen State 2 in Black. Both Osborne and Stone however had seen State 2 in Black, and SG's listing is therefore almost certainly correct, and Statham wrong.

'QB': Exactly the same comments as 'QA' above apply to this unit.

'QC': Once again, the same comments apply as 'QA' and 'QB' above. Additionally I have myself seen a single example of State 2 in Black, and Winston Hollins has provided a scan of his copy:



State 2

'RB': Repaired once only. SG list it under the fourth (1841) repair, but both Statham and Stone list it under the second half of a split Provisional repair. Osborne gives some support to this by stating that the NE star is 'slightly weaker'. No authority has seen a State 2 in Black. However, it seems likely that SG's listing is incorrect in this case. Further evidence is required.

'RC': Repaired once only, at the Provisional repair. Statham suggests the second half of a split Provisional repair, so had clearly not seen State 2 in Black. Both Osborne and Stone however had seen it, so SG's listing is probably correct, and Statham wrong.

'RD': This is a particularly problematical lettering, not least because (as has just recently come to light) Nissen had Plates 5 and 6 the wrong way round. Unfortunately there is no Imprimatur for Plate 6. However direct comparison of the Nissen illustrations and the Imprimatur for Plate 5 shows Plate 5 with the 'R' tilted slightly left, and the 'D' slightly right. In addition, a marked diagonal scratch sloping left to right below the 'D', is clearly visible in both the Imprimatur and the first copy below of State 1. This scratch is described by Nissen (and then followed by Litchfield and Proud) as occurring on Plate 6. Similarly a pronounced weakness of much of the left side frame-line is ascribed by all three to Plate 5, but in fact is present on Plate 6. Osborne got it right, correctly ascribing the scratch to Plate 5, and the left side weakness to Plate 6. Plate 5 has a small weakness on the left side just above the letter-square, clearly visible in all these examples:



Nissen: Plates '5' and '6' illustrations

Plate 5 'RD'  
Imprimatur



Imprimatur

State 1

State 1

(both showing diagonal scratch below 'D')

(scratch not visible)

Formerly believed to have been repaired once only, at the Provisional repair, Osborne, Statham and Stone had not seen State 2 in Black, and both Statham and Stone suggest the second half of a split repair. However, what I believe to be State 2 in Black is illustrated below left (kindly supplied by Mark Bloxham). This shows both side frame-lines restored, slight thinning of the stars, and a burr-line upper right. This stamp is on cover, and was formerly owned by Geoffrey Mason (from Christie's via Donald Forbes-Smith), BPA certificate number 76385 (17 April 1975), of which a photocopy in Winston Hollins' possession is also reproduced below. It has to be said here that not all authorities agree that this is Plate 5, some believing it to be in fact Plate 6. With that caveat, however, I believe that SG's listing of it under AS31, the Provisional printing, is therefore confirmed as correct, and Statham and Stone wrong (though a later Stone supplement, prepared from information supplied by Geoffrey Mason, shows that the existence of State 2 in Black was accepted by Stone). However, it is also clear that it was repaired again, at the final (1841) repair, as both Reds illustrated show both stars fully restored, and a marked burr-line lower right which is absent from State 2:



State 2 (Mark Bloxham) (New) State 3 (Robin Cassell) (New) State 3 (Winston Hollins)



State 2 (the same stamp) on its original cover, ex Geoffrey Mason (photocopy)

'SA': SG, Osborne and Stone list under the Provisional repair. Statham states the second half of the Provisional repair, so had not seen State 2 in Black. However illustrated below are Winston Hollins' State 1, and John McCulloch's State 2 in Black, which shows a weaker letter 'A'. My Reds (right) show a slightly weak 'A' in State 1, and markedly weaker 'S' and slightly weaker stars in State 2 - though my State 2 in Red actually has a Brandon Certificate (number 25662 of 10 May 2000) as State 1! Statham is therefore incorrect:



State 1                      State 2                      State 1                      State 2  
(Winston Hollins)      (John McCulloch)

‘SC’: See ‘RC’ and ‘SA’ above. Exactly the same initial comments apply. In addition, Mark Bloxham has kindly supplied a scan of State 2 in Black:



State 2

‘SD’: See ‘RC’ and ‘SA’ above. Exactly the same comments apply.

‘SG’: Stone alone suggests that this unit was repaired once, at the fourth (1841) repair. SG, Osborne and Statham all ignore. I only have it in Black, so am unable to comment. However Stone’s listing of this repair is based on Winston Hollins’ wide-margined copy of ‘SF’ illustrated below right, which shows a firmer left side to ‘SG’, and a clear Transfer Roller Line in the lower left margin of ‘SG’. Further research required.



State 1

All State 1

‘SF’ with TRL right

‘TB’: According to SG, Osborne and Statham, this unit was only repaired once, at the Provisional repair, so list States 1 and 2 (Provisional printing) in Black, and States 1 (pre-Provisional) and 2 in Red. Stone however also suggests that it was repaired at the second (1840) repair, which would produce States 1, 2 and 3 (Provisional printing) in Black, and States 2 (pre-Provisional) and 3 in Red. I only have a State 2(?) in Red. Winston Hollins’ ‘TB’s are illustrated below: the second 1d Black is the stamp used by Stone to illustrate his alleged ‘State 2’ (Plate VI). Winston points out that although the repair to ‘TA’ has clearly taken place (pronounced burr-line in left margin - i.e. right margin of ‘TA’), apart from faint scratches in the left margin of his ‘TB’ almost touching the design, there appears to be no firm evidence of repair. In the current state of our knowledge, I cannot support a change to listings, as Stone may well have been mistaken. Further research required.

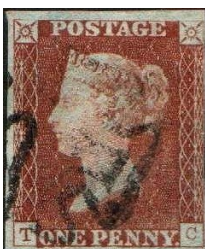


State 1

State ?1

All State ?2

‘TC’: Repaired once only. SG list it under the fourth (1841) repair. Both Statham and Stone place it in the second half of a split Provisional repair, and Osborne states that the ‘right star is thinned’. Donald Forbes-Smith is alleged to have had a State 2 in Black. I have a single Red in State 2 (and have seen another) which shows a slightly weakened SE long ray in the NE star, confirming Statham’s and Stone’s contention that it cannot be from the fourth repair, and SG’s listing is therefore incorrect. However, confirmation of the existence of State 2 in Black would be helpful. See my comments under **Conclusions and Recommendations** below:



State 2

‘TD’: Repaired once only, at the Provisional operation. Statham suggests that it was a product of the second half of a split repair, not having seen State 2 in Black. Osborne had not seen one either. Stone however places it in the first half, implying that he had seen State 2 in Black, and as in the case of ‘TC’ above, Donald Forbes-Smith allegedly had a copy. This would confirm SG’s listing under both Black and Red products of this operation. Further evidence, in the shape of a confirmed copy of State 2 in Black, would be helpful. Readers should be aware that the editors of the SG Specialised Catalogue have been traditionally rather sceptical of some of Stone’s findings, which in view of some of my findings above may well be considered justified:



State 1

State 2

'TE': According to SG, this unit was repaired at the fourth (1841) repair. Unfortunately, Osborne, Statham and Stone make no mention of a second state of this unit, and no other authority reports one. It may be that this repair should be viewed with caution. Sight of a red print in State 2 would help support the catalogue listing. I only have it in State 1:



State 1

State 1

'TG': Repaired once only, at the fourth (1841) repair. Both SG (correctly) and Stone list it, and I have a copy. Statham however does not list it, which may be a typographical error:



State 1

State 2

'TK': Repaired once only, at the Provisional operation. Stone suggests the first half, but Statham suggests the second half, so had not seen State 2 in Black (and neither had Osborne). See my note under 'TD' above:



State 1

State 2

State 2

(Winston Hollins)

'TL': Believed to have been repaired once only. Statham and Stone both say the first half of the Provisional operation, so they had presumably both seen State 2 in Black. Osborne, who also confirmed a second state, had not seen it in Black. SG ignore altogether, not listing a second state at all. I have a red in a later state, which is rather curious insofar as the NW star corner is weak (as stated by both Osborne and Stone), but the NE star is strong. However I have no evidence to support a further repair, and conclude that this impression is one of the very few anomalies of this repair. Winston Hollins' examples of this lettering clearly reveal the difficulty of determining state: whilst the letters are in most cases slightly thinned, there is considerable variation in the strength of the NE star. In his (from the strength of the letters) State 1, the NW square is weak. In his final copy (lower right) there is even a suggestion of strengthening of both stars, which could bring the fourth (1841) repair under consideration. In the light of the evidence presented here, it is my view that SG should, at the very least, list this repair under the Provisional operation. The evidence for a further later repair is at this stage extremely tenuous, and further research is clearly required:



State 1

State 2

State 2

(Hollins)



State 1

State 1

State 2?

State 2/3?

(Winston Hollins)

### Conclusions and Recommendations

It will readily be seen that in respect of certain letterings which underwent repair during the lifetime of use of Plate 5, there remain a number of unanswered questions, some dispute between authorities, and apparently some errors and/or omissions. Misleading and confusing statements clearly hinder accurate understanding of these repairs. It has not been possible to resolve all the existing anomalies, but I believe that I have been able to address a significant number of them. Many of those suggested resolutions will move certain later states from one repair into another - and a casual glance at the difference in listed catalogue values for certain states (notably between products of the fourth (1841) repair and pre-Provisional states in Red) will show that aside from the purely academic aim of attempting to arrive at the truth, there is a substantial financial implication. It is clearly incumbent on those of us who specialise in this fascinating plate to make every effort to get it right!

In the light of the evidence presented here, it is recommended that the editors of Stanley Gibbons' Great Britain Specialised Catalogue, Volume 1 (Queen Victoria) carry out a thorough review of the listings for Plate 5 for future editions of the catalogue, taking into account the most recent data. Their aim should be to amend and correct apparently erroneous listings, and to remove the confusing anomalies that have bedevilled studies of the plate for years.

In particular, it is recommended that, at the very least, mention be made of the suggestion by some authorities, that the Provisional repair may have been a 'split' repair. Whilst it is clear that at this time there is no substantive evidence to support this contention, it would be helpful to have a list of those letterings which are known in a later state in red as a result of the Provisional repair, but for which to date no corresponding prints have been seen in Black. If all these letterings were to be eventually discovered (and I have already eliminated a number of these from the late Ken Statham's list), it would finally resolve this argument by proving that this was not a split repair.

The following is a list of those letterings/states which are known in Red, but have so far not been seen by any authority in the corresponding state in Black:

State 2: **GB, GC, GE, HK, OL, RB**

State 3: **FA**

(It should be noted here that the lengthy list given by Statham includes a number of letterings which have been seen in Black by other authorities, including Osborne and/or Stone, or others, and I have deleted those accordingly.)

Conversely, there are certain potential multiples which are the key to absolute proof that this was a split repair: if any of these were to be found with adjacent impressions in different states, as is the case with Plates 8 and 9, the problem would be resolved once and for all:

**FA** with **FB** or **GA**; **GB** with **FB**, **GA** or **HB**; **GC** with **FC** or **HC**; **RB** with **QB**, **RA**, **RC** or **SB**; and **TC** with **SC**, **TB** or **TD** (or any blocks involving combinations of these).

I would welcome any information which might lead to the resolution of any of those questions which I have been unable to resolve in the course of this study. The letterings involved are: **CC, EA, EE, HB, JB, LA, NA, OL, PA, SG, TB, TD, TE, TK, TL** (for details see above). Furthermore, the problems with 'RD' have been specifically high-lighted above: it is clear that further material would be immensely helpful. I can be contacted via my Website, [www.sturstamp.com](http://www.sturstamp.com), and scans of questioned stamps at 300dpi or above will be gratefully received.

Finally, listed below is a recommended revised SG Specialised catalogue listing, showing the repaired letterings under their correct 'AS' reference number, in accordance with the new information outlined above:

### Recommended New Listing

#### First 1840 Repair

AS27 1d.black. State 2: AA, AB, BB, CA, CB, CC, CD, CE, DA, DB (double letter), DC, DD, DE, EA, EB (double letter), EC, ED, FA, JA, OA, OB, PA, TA

#### Second 1840 Repair

AS28 1d.black. State 2: BA (retouched letter), BC, NA (retouched letter), PB

AS29 1d. Black. State 3: BB, CB, CC, CD, CE, DA, DB (double letter), DC, DD, EA, ED

#### Plate 5 in Red, State 1

AS26 1d. Red-brown (shades) .....unchanged.

NOTE. Double letter unit HB and constant variety unit QC exist as the 1st state in red only in the scarce pre-provisional printing (see No. AS35) as they were repaired again in the Provisional Issue.

Double letter units DB and EB, the retouched letter units BA and also CC exist in red only in 2nd or later states (CC and DB 3rd and 4th states only in red) as a result of one or both 1840 repairs.

### Red Printings Repaired at One or Both 1840 Repairs

These red printings do not exist in the 1st (unrepaired) state, because of the earlier repairs during the period of black printings:

AS26A First appearance in red in the below-listed states, but subject to further repair(s) at a later stage:

1d. Red-brown. State 2 (1st 1840 repair): AA, AB, EB (double letter), EC, FA, PA (see note below AS27A), TA

State 2 (2nd 1840 repair): BA (retouched letter), BC, NA (retouched letter), PB

State 3 (both 1840 repairs): BB, CC, CD, DA, DB (double letter), DC, DD, EA, ED

AS27A Printings in red known only in the below-listed states (as a result of one or both 1840 repairs, and not being subject to further repair):

1d. Red-brown. State 2: CA, DE, JA, OA, OB

(Note: 'PA', formerly listed here, has recently been reported in a later state, possibly the result of the late (1841) repair, but is as yet unconfirmed. The former listing AS28A only involved the lettering 'NA', which is now known to exist in a later state as a result of further repair.)

AS29A 1d. Red-brown. State 3: CB, CE

### Pre-provisional Printing in Red

AS34 1d. Red-brown. State 2: PB

AS35 1d. Red-brown. State 1: AC, AK, BD, FB, FC, FD, GA, GB, GC, HA, HB (double letter), HC, HK, KA, LA, MA, QA, QB, QC (constant variety), RA, RB, RC, RD, SA, SB, SC, SD, TB, TC, TD, TK, TL;

State 2: EB, EC, FA, TA

### Provisional Printing 1841, in Black (Third Repair)

AS30 1d. black. State 3: PB (non-coincident re-entry)

AS31 1d. black. State 2: AC, AK, FB, FC, FD, GA, HA, HB (double letter), HC, KA, LA, MA, QA, QB, QC (constant variety), RA, RC, RD, SA, SB, SC, SD, TB, TC, TD, TK, TL;

State 3: EB (double letter), EC, FA, TA

### 1841 Printings in Red from Provisional Repair

AS32 1d. Red-brown. State 3: PB (non-coincident re-entry)

AS33 1d. Red-brown. State 2: AC, AK, BD, FB, FC, FD, GA, GB, GC, HA, HB (double letter), HC, HK, KA, LA, MA, QA, QB, QC (constant variety), RA, RB, RC, RD, SA, SB, SC, SD, TB, TC, TD, TK, TL

State 3: EB (double letter), EC, FA, TA

Several authorities suggest that the Provisional repair was carried out in two operations a few days apart, in effect a 'split' repair, the second part having been carried out after all printing in Black had ceased. Whilst there is incontrovertible evidence for a 'split' Provisional repair in other plates used at this time, the only evidence for this having occurred in Plate 5 is purely circumstantial, in that some letterings have not to date been found in the corresponding state in Black. Because of the rarity of such stamps, it cannot be positively asserted that this repair was 'split'. However, the following letterings known in Red, and identified as products of this repair, have not so far been seen in Black:

State 2: GB, GC, GE, HK, OL, RB

State 3: FA

### Printings in Red Only, Fourth Repair (late 1841)

AS39 State 2: AD, AH, EH, FE, GE, GH, HH, HK, IA, IB, IC, LB, MB, NB, NC, OC, RG, SH, TF, TG

AS38 State 3: AB, AC, BA (retouched letter), BC, HC, MA, NA

AS37 State 4: BB, CC, CD, DA, DB (double letter), DC, DD, EA, EB (double letter), ED

AS36 State 4: EC

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