

Previous Articles - 63

Silver Jubilee Myths – Morocco Agencies First Day Cover

By Nick Levinge

It is often said that FDCs of the Morocco Agencies stamps are rare as only 2 sheets of each stamp reached Morocco in time for the issue of the stamps on 8 May, which would mean that a maximum of 240 covers could exist for each set. I have not seen the source of this information, and I have always wondered if it is likely to be true. One of the problems in investigating the question is that we do not know how many FDCs were produced in any of the issuing territories and therefore cannot make accurate comparisons. It may be, for example, that 240 is a reasonable number for others of the issues, but on the other hand it may be that there were far more than 240 from Morocco Agencies and also from most of the other places issuing Silver Jubilee stamps. It is hard to know how many FDCs were produced for each issue. On the whole they are not of sufficient value to be sold singly at auction and therefore a trawl of auction results over the years will not provide the answer. All I can say is that having observed Silver Jubilee items for sale over many years, I have not been struck by Morocco Agencies FDCs appearing for sale much less frequently than those from other territories.

It is possible to make records of FDCs appearing, albeit very far from comprehensive and we have a sample of 24 covers at this stage from which some very tentative conclusions might be drawn. Firstly it has to be said that the British currency stamps and the Tangier stamps were for use in Tangier, the former designed for use on air mail items and parcels. Therefore it is most unlikely that any would be found used on FDCs other than in Tangier and that is what the sample shows. The French and Spanish currency surcharges are more interesting. FDCs of the French currency set have been found used in Tangier, Fez, Rabat and Casablanca. Of the Spanish currency set, examples have been noted used in Tetuan and Tangier. The sample is small and it may be that FDCs from Marrakesh, Mazagan and Saffi in the case of French currency and Larache in the case of Spanish currency, have yet to be noted. Readers are therefore requested to report sightings of any of those not yet discovered.

In the case of the French and Spanish currency stamps, it is clear that if there were only two sheets available on 8 May then they were sent to various places and in the case of the French currency stamps there would not have been enough for there to be even one sheet in each of the places from which FDCs emanated. It is also worth considering who made FDCs. Those who collect them across the Silver Jubilee range will be familiar with many names that crop up again and again. J Davis of Liverpool and PW Ware of Bristol are very frequently encountered and they are found on the covers illustrated below. It is clear therefore that dealers were aware of the issue and could if so inclined, made arrangements to create FDCs. A letter from the Acting British Postmaster at Tangier to another dealer, George King dated 27 April 1935 suggests that even so near the actual date of issue of the stamps, the Postmaster lacked complete information as he gave the date of issue as 7th May, when in fact it was 8th in due course, but this would not have impeded the creation of FDCs.

Finally, contemporary valuations give some indication of scarcity. The January `1937 list of H & A Wallace is reproduced below. It will be noted that at 40/- for the British currency set, and 30/- for

the Spanish set, these FDCs were amongst the most expensive, only Mauritius, South Africa and South West Africa cost more. The Tangier and French currency sets were amongst the cheapest. However, the important point is that the cost of FDCs was not significantly more than that of a used set, the ratios comparing well with other sets. The indication is that the prices were driven by the scarcity of used stamps generally and not of FDCs. Another company's advertisement of the same period shows similar results.

More evidence is needed to reach firm conclusions, but my inclination is to believe that Morocco Agencies FDCs were no scarcer than any others in relation to demand. Therefore, if there were as few as 240 stamps available on the day of issue, that may be an indication of the numbers of FDCs from some other territories, but far more likely is the possibility that the two sheets idea is just a myth that has been repeated so many times over the years without being questioned, that it has acquired some semblance of objective truth.



Tangier – Sutton Coldfield



Tangier - Huddersfield



Tangier - Liverpool



Fez - Bristol



Tetuan - Bristol



Tangier - Sussex



Tangier - Liverpool



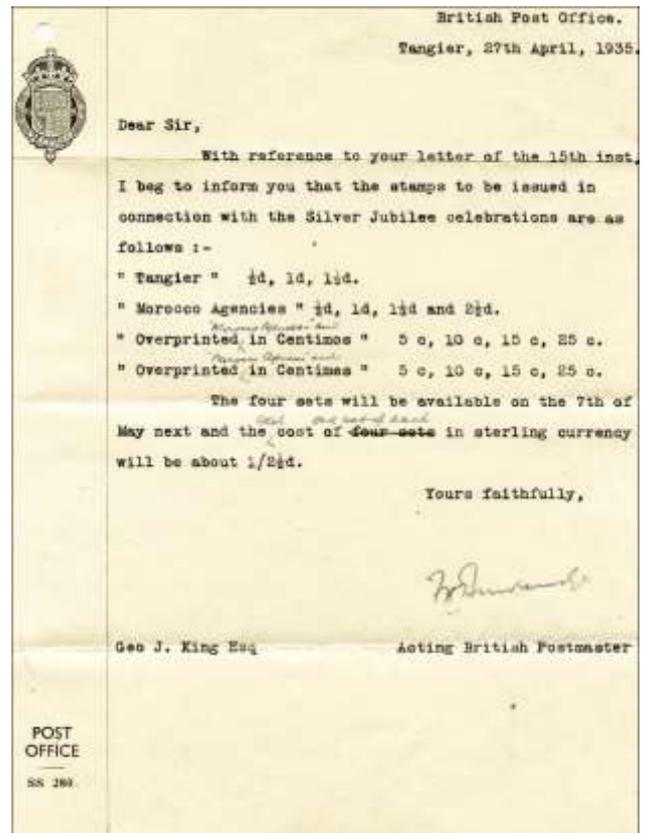
Tangier - Liverpool



Casablanca - Rotherham



Rabat - London



Tangier Acting British Postmaster, letter to a dealer, Geo J. King



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CAYMAN ISLANDS	1d.	2d.	3d.	4d.	5d.	6d.	7d.	8d.	9d.	10d.	11d.	12c.	13c.	14c.	15c.	16c.	17c.	18c.	19c.	20c.	21c.	22c.	23c.	24c.	25c.	26c.	27c.	28c.	29c.	30c.	31c.	32c.	33c.	34c.	35c.	36c.	37c.	38c.	39c.	40c.	41c.	42c.	43c.	44c.	45c.	46c.	47c.	48c.	49c.	50c.																																																	
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DOMINICA	1d.	2d.	3d.	4d.	5d.	6d.	7d.	8d.	9d.	10d.	11d.	12c.	13c.	14c.	15c.	16c.	17c.	18c.	19c.	20c.	21c.	22c.	23c.	24c.	25c.	26c.	27c.	28c.	29c.	30c.	31c.	32c.	33c.	34c.	35c.	36c.	37c.	38c.	39c.	40c.	41c.	42c.	43c.	44c.	45c.	46c.	47c.	48c.	49c.	50c.																																																	
EGYPT Jubilee Seal. Mint, 55/-.	1d.	2d.	3d.	4d.	5d.	6d.	7d.	8d.	9d.	10d.	11d.	12c.	13c.	14c.	15c.	16c.	17c.	18c.	19c.	20c.	21c.	22c.	23c.	24c.	25c.	26c.	27c.	28c.	29c.	30c.	31c.	32c.	33c.	34c.	35c.	36c.	37c.	38c.	39c.	40c.	41c.	42c.	43c.	44c.	45c.	46c.	47c.	48c.	49c.	50c.																																																	
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FALKLAND IS. (South Pole) Postmarked	1d.	2d.	3d.	4d.	5d.	6d.	7d.	8d.	9d.	10d.	11d.	12c.	13c.	14c.	15c.	16c.	17c.	18c.	19c.	20c.	21c.	22c.	23c.	24c.	25c.	26c.	27c.	28c.	29c.	30c.	31c.	32c.	33c.	34c.	35c.	36c.	37c.	38c.	39c.	40c.	41c.	42c.	43c.	44c.	45c.	46c.	47c.	48c.	49c.	50c.																																																	
SOUTH GEORGIA, set on Cover, 40/-.	1d.	2d.	3d.	4d.	5d.	6d.	7d.	8d.	9d.	10d.	11d.	12c.	13c.	14c.	15c.	16c.	17c.	18c.	19c.	20c.	21c.	22c.	23c.	24c.	25c.	26c.	27c.	28c.	29c.	30c.	31c.	32c.	33c.	34c.	35c.	36c.																																																															