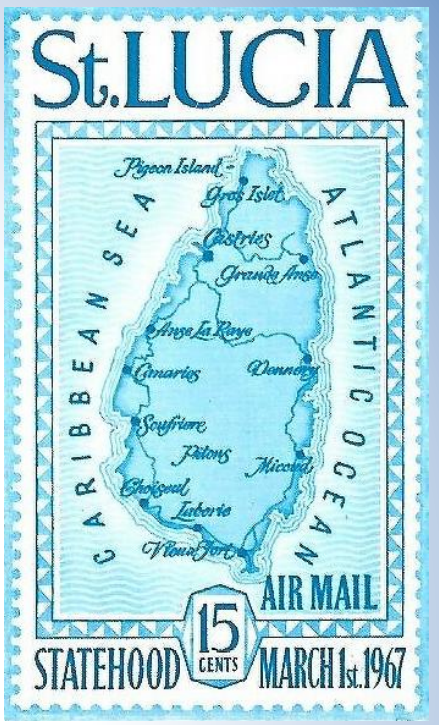
Queen Victoria Era Stamps of St. Lucia

Scott Martz 1/2013

Updated March 2026 by Tom Fortunato

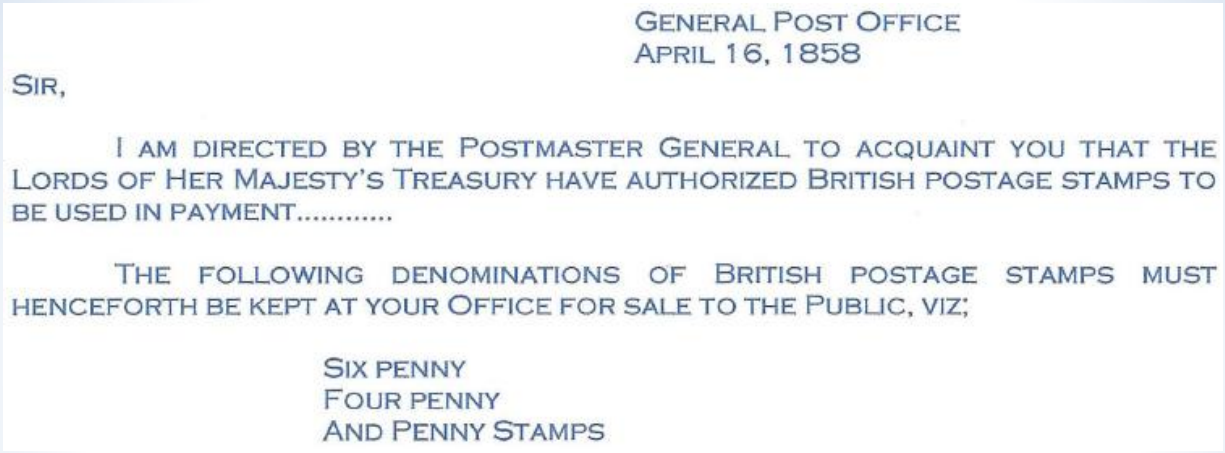


Saint Lucia was inhabited by the Arawak and Kalinago Caribs before European contact in the early 16th century. It was colonized by the British and French in the 17th century and was the subject of several possession changes until 1814, when it was ceded to the British by France for the final time.

Wikipedia

Here's an 1849 cover mailed from St. Lucia sent to London in the days before stamps were used with a crowned circle "Paid at St. Lucia" mark. Postage was one shilling.

The colony of St. Lucia began using British stamps in 1858, when it was mandated that all mail leaving the island must be prepaid and have affixed stamps as proof.



GENERAL POST OFFICE
APRIL 16, 1858

SIR,

I AM DIRECTED BY THE POSTMASTER GENERAL TO ACQUAINT YOU THAT THE LORDS OF HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY HAVE AUTHORIZED BRITISH POSTAGE STAMPS TO BE USED IN PAYMENT.....

THE FOLLOWING DENOMINATIONS OF BRITISH POSTAGE STAMPS MUST HENCEFORTH BE KEPT AT YOUR OFFICE FOR SALE TO THE PUBLIC, VIZ;

SIX PENNY
FOUR PENNY
AND PENNY STAMPS

Fifty pounds in face value stamps were dispatched to the island, thought to be a two-month supply. The 4d paid the western hemisphere rate, the 6d paid the single rate to Great Britain, and the 1d paid any make-up rate. They were authorized for use through May 1860 by which time specific St. Lucia stamps were expected to be ready for use.

A cancellation device was sent to the colony with the stamps, with the unique colony identifier, A 11. Its first recorded use was August 28, 1858.

The head of Queen Victoria was engraved by C.H. Jeens in May of 1860 for use on the 9 pence stamp for South Australia. That engraving was placed in a vertical oval large enough for the head, surrounded by a plain band with the words St. Lucia and Postage, and an engraved background in the corners.

Jeens was paid £2 12s 6p for the drawing, and £9 9s for the engraving. This design was considered by many as one of Perkins Bacon's most elegant.

handwritten "Specimen"

rose-red 1d

blue 4d

green 6d

Scott #1-3

The stamps were printed using a line engraved process. To save money for the colony one plate was made with only the ink's color differentiating its denomination.

With fewer than 200 people on the island being able read or write, this may have been another reason to forego inscribing values on each.

The final plates consisted of of 240 stamps per sheet.

Stamps from the first run were reportedly printed by a Mr. Dix on October 10. The total number of stamps from the printing runs by denomination were:

- 36 sheets of the 1p rose-red (8,640 stamps)
- 13 sheets of the 4p blue (3,120 stamps)
- 17 Sheets of the 6p green (4,080 stamps)

The first issue was printed on paper produced by Rush Mills in Northampton on watermarked paper with small six-pointed stars and "POSTAGE" repeated twice along the sheet's sides and once on the top and bottom edge with 5 parallel lines between the wording.

Three days later on October 14 the stamps were documented as being perforated by a Miss Stewart.

The perforation needles were set to 14-16, but they often became clogged resulting in rough perforations.

rough

rough cut free

clear

The first issue was shipped from Perkins Bacon in Great Britain by island packet on November 17 and placed on sale December 18.

Castries, St. Lucia street scene, 1860

Stamps with perforations clear on all sides free of the design are extremely rare. This example has perforations clear of the design on all sides.

Scott #2

Stamp shades of all three abound due to ink batches with slight differences in the mix and exposure over time.

In 1863 another printing of these stamps took place using the same printing plate but through De La Rue printers. Their results were not as clear as the first printing, mostly due to the wear of the plate. While the ink mixes used were different, causing slightly different coloration and smearing, they are easily identified because of the change of watermark to the Crown and CC type.

lake red

42 sheets

10,080 stamps

indigo

13 sheets

3,120 stamps

emerald green

23 sheets

5,520 stamps

All perf 12 ½. Known with watermark reversed.

Scott #4-6

In 1864 another printing took place using the same plate, watermark design and 12.5 perforation, but with changed colors and the addition of a 1 shilling denomination.

black 1d

light yellow 4d

lilac 6d

orange red 1 sh

Scott #7-10

Their second printing were perf 14, all else similar.

Scott #11-14

January 27, 1882 folded letter from St. Lucia to London, paid at the correct 4d postage rate, also noted in red crayon. Still, the shade of the 4d yellow is very close to that of the 1-shilling orange, potentially causing confusion.

reverse

In 1881 stamps were surcharged with denominations. The first was a ½ d in green, and 2 ½ d in scarlet. Perforated 14.

Scott #15, #17

In 1883 five additional stamps were prepared with surcharged denominations on new paper, which had the Crown and CA watermark. These were also perforated 14.

Scott #19-23

In 1884 the 4 pence in yellow was reprinted, and this time it was perforated 12.

Scott #24

In 1885 2 additional values were prepared, but never put into use, a half penny, and 6 pence. The 6 pence is extremely rare.

Scott #25

Scott #26

The 1883 stamp issues followed the trend of the rest of the empire by releasing the first large scale key type design used by multiple colonies and territories. The first 6 values were done in single colors.

De La Rue essay

Scott #27//36

The second group was done in 2 colors, highlighting the country and denomination, except for the 1d color change.

Scott #29//39

Two different dies were used to produce these key types,

Die 1 or A,
Die 2 or B.

Here is the guide from the Scott Catalogue.

DIE A

DIE B

DIE A:

1. The lines in the groundwork vary in thickness and are not uniformly straight.
2. The seventh and eighth lines from the top, in the groundwork, converge where they meet the head.
3. There is a small dash in the upper part of the second jewel in the band of the crown.
4. The vertical color line in front of the throat stops at the sixth line of shading on the neck.

DIE B:

1. The lines in the groundwork are all thin and straight.
2. All the lines of the background are parallel.
3. There is no dash in the upper part of the second jewel in the band of the crown.
4. The vertical color line in front of the throat stops at the eighth line of shading on the neck.

And here is the guide from the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue.

VICTORIAN KEY TYPE

Die I

1. The ball of decoration on the second point of the crown appears as a dark mass of lines.
2. Dark vertical shading separates the front hair from the bun.
3. The vertical line of colour outlining the front of the throat stops at the sixth line of shading on the neck.
4. The white space in the coil of the hair above the curl is roughly the shape of a pin's head.

Die II

1. There are very few lines of colour in the ball and it appears almost white.
2. A white vertical strand of hair appears in place of the dark shading.
3. The line stops at the eighth line of shading.
4. The white space is oblong, with a line of colour partially dividing it at the left end.

Plates numbered 1 and 2 are both Die I. Plates 3 and 4 are Die II.

In 1892 there were three overprints done, one of which was bisected.

Scott #40

Scott #41

Scott #42

Several varieties are known, including varieties to individual lettering and double surcharges.

In case you were wondering… from the 2008 Scott catalog…

Values for unused stamps are for examples with original gum as defined in the catalogue introduction. Very fine examples of Nos. 1-26 will have perforations touching the design on at least one side due to the narrow spacing of the stamps on the plates. Stamps with perfs clear of the framelines on all four sides are very scarce and will command higher prices.

Queen Victoria — A1

Perf. 14 to 16

1860, Dec. 18 Engr. Wmk. 5

1	A1 (1p) rose red	110.00	75.00
a.	Double impression	*2,200.*	
b.	Horiz. pair, imperf vert.	—	
2	A1 (4p) deep blue	250.00	175.00
a.	Horiz. pair, imperf vert.	—	
3	A1 (6p) green	325.00	225.00
a.	Horiz. pair, imperf vert.	—	
	Nos. 1-3 (3)	685.00	475.00

For types overprinted see #15, 17, 19-26.

1863 Wmk. 1 *Perf. 12½*

4	A1 (1p) lake	95.00	*110.00*
5	A1 (4p) slate blue	140.00	150.00
6	A1 (6p) emerald	200.00	210.00
	Nos. 4-6 (3)	435.00	470.00

Nos. 4-6 exist imperforate on stamp paper, from proof sheets.

1864

7	A1 (1p) black	25.00	14.00
8	A1 (4p) yellow	190.00	45.00
a.	(4p) olive yellow	425.00	100.00
b.	(4p) lemon yellow	*1,750.*	
9	A1 (6p) violet	140.00	40.00
a.	(6p) lilac	210.00	32.50
b.	(6p) deep lilac	160.00	40.00
10	A1 (1sh) red orange	250.00	32.50
a.	(1sh) orange	275.00	32.50
c.	Horiz. pair, imperf between	—	
	Nos. 7-10 (4)	605.00	131.50

Nos. 7-10 exist imperforate on stamp paper, from proof sheets.

Perf. 14

11	A1 (1p) deep black	32.50	20.00
a.	Horiz. pair, imperf between	—	
12	A1 (4p) yellow	125.00	24.00
a.	(4p) olive yellow	325.00	105.00
13	A1 (6p) pale lilac	125.00	24.00
a.	(6p) deep lilac	125.00	45.00
b.	(6p) violet	275.00	*77.50*
14	A1 (1sh) deep orange	160.00	19.00
a.	(1sh) orange	250.00	25.00
	Nos. 11-14 (4)	442.50	87.00

Type of 1860 Surcharged in Black or Red:

a

b

1881

15	A1(a) ½p green	77.50	*100.00*
17	A1(b) 2½p scarlet	42.50	26.00

1883-84 Wmk. Crown and CA (2)

19	A1(a) ½p green	24.50	*32.50*
20	A1(a) 1p black (R)	32.50	13.50
a.	Half used as ½p on cover	—	
21	A1(a) 4p yellow	325.00	24.00
22	A1(a) 6p violet	35.00	35.00
23	A1(a) 1sh orange	310.00	190.00
	Nos. 19-23 (5)	727.00	295.00

1884 *Perf. 12*

24	A1(a) 4p yellow	300.00	32.50

1885 Wmk. 1 *Perf. 12½*

25	A1 ½p emerald	77.50	
26	A1 6p slate blue	1,500.	

Nos. 25 and 26 were prepared for use but not issued.

A5

Die B

For explanation of dies A and B see "Dies of British Colonial Stamps..." in the catalogue Table of Contents.

1883-98 Typo. Wmk. 2 *Perf. 14*

27	A5	½p green ('91)	3.25	1.25
a.	Die A ('83)		11.00	6.00
28	A5	1p rose (die A) ('83)	50.00	14.50
29	A5	1p lilac ('91)	5.00	.35
a.	Die A ('86)		10.00	*7.25*
b.	Die A, imperf., pair		900.00	
30	A5	2p ultra & brn org ('98)	4.75	1.25
31	A5	2½p ultra ('91)	6.50	1.25
a.	Die A ('93)		55.00	2.75
32	A5	3p lilac & grn ('91)	5.75	*6.50*
a.	Die A ('86)		150.00	20.00
33	A5	4p brown ('93)	4.25	*2.75*
a.	Die A ('85)		42.50	1.50
b.	Die A, imperf., pair		*1,050.*	
34	A5	6p vio (die A; '86)	*300.00*	*240.00*
a.	Imperf., pair		*2,000.*	
35	A5	6p lil & bl (die A; '87)	5.50	*13.50*
a.	Die B ('91)		29.00	29.00
36	A5	1sh brn org (die A) ('85)	450.00	175.00
37	A5	1sh lil & red ('91)	9.00	*6.00*
a.	Die A ('87)		150.00	35.00
38	A5	5sh lil & org ('91)	60.00	*175.00*
39	A5	10sh lil & blk ('91)	110.00	*175.00*
	Nos. 27-39 (13)		1,014.	812.35

Nos. 32, 32a, 35a and 33a Surcharged in Black:

No. 40

No. 41

No. 42

1892

40	A5	½p on 3p lil & grn	95.00	30.00
a.	Die A		175.00	85.00
b.	Dbl. surch., die B		1,000.	800.00
c.	Invtd. surch., die B		2,450.	800.00
d.	Triple surch., one on back		*1,350.*	*1,500.*
41	A5	½p on half of 6p lilac & blue	30.00	4.00
a.	Slanting serif		240.00	150.00
c.	Without the bar of "½"		325.00	160.00
d.	"2" of "½" omitted		575.00	600.00
e.	Surcharged sideways		1,675.	
f.	Double surcharge		725.00	725.00
g.	Triple surcharge		*1,450.*	
42	A5	1p on 4p brown	6.75	*4.25*
b.	Double surcharge		275.00	
c.	Inverted surcharge		1,100.	950.00
	Nos. 40-42 (3)		131.75	38.25

No. 40 is found with wide or narrow "O" in "ONE," and large or small "A" in "HALF." For more detailed listings, see the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of Stamps and Covers.*

From the 2016 Gibbons Commonwealth & Emp. Catalogue.

CROWN COLONY

PERKINS BACON "CANCELLED". For notes on these handstamps, showing "CANCELLED" between horizontal bars forming an oval, see Catalogue Introduction.

Half penny

1 (2)

(Recess P.B.)

1860 (18 Dec). Wmk Small Star, W w 2. P 14 to 16.

1	1	(1d.) rose-red (H/S "CANCELLED" in oval £8500)	£100	65·00
		a. Imperf vert (horiz pair)		
		b. Double impression	£2500	
2		(4d.) blue (H/S "CANCELLED" in oval £9000)	£225	£150
		a. *Deep blue*		
		b. Imperf vert (horiz pair)		
3		(6d.) green (H/S "CANCELLED" in oval £12000)	£300	£200
		a. Imperf vert (horiz pair)		
		b. *Deep green*	£350	£225

(Recess D.L.R.)

1863. Wmk Crown CC. P 12½.

5	1	(1d.) lake	95·00	£110
		ax. Wmk reversed	70·00	90·00
		b. *Brownish lake*	£110	£110
		bx. Wmk reversed	85·00	90·00
7		(4d.) indigo	£130	£140
		x. Wmk reversed		
8		(6d.) emerald-green	£225	£225
		w. Wmk inverted		
		x. Wmk reversed	£190	£180

All three values exist imperforate from proof sheets.

Prepared for use, but not issued. Surch as T 2

9	1	½d. on (6d.) emerald-green	70·00	
		x. Wmk reversed	£110	
10		6d. on (4d.) indigo	£1100	

		a. Surch "Sex pence"	£3500	

Nos. 9/10 were first recorded in 1885. They may have been prepared in 1876.

1864 (19 Nov)–**76**. Wmk Crown CC.

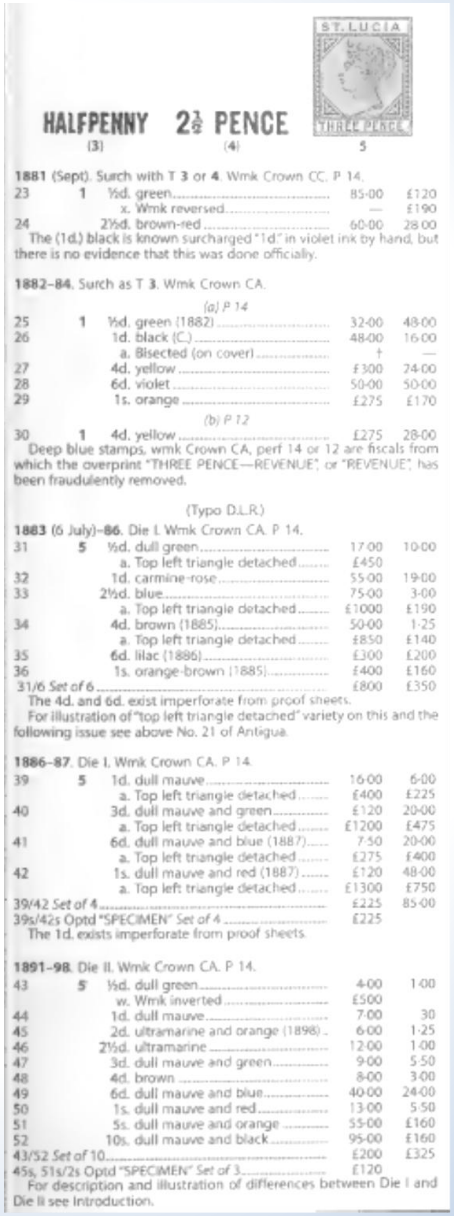
(a) P 12½

11	1	(1d.) black	30·00	13·00
		a. *Intense black*	29·00	12·00
		x. Wmk reversed	38·00	16·00
		y. Wmk inverted and reversed	£120	
12		(4d.) yellow	£170	50·00
		b. *Lemon-yellow*	£1500	
		c. *Chrome-yellow*	£200	42·00
		d. *Olive-yellow*	£375	90·00
		w. Wmk inverted		
		x. Wmk reversed	£225	50·00
		y. Wmk inverted and reversed		
13		(6d.) violet	£130	42·00
		a. *Mauve*	£190	32·00
		b. *Deep lilac*	£160	42·00
		w. Wmk inverted	—	£120
		x. Wmk reversed	£160	60·00
14		(1s.) brown-orange	£325	30·00
		b. *Orange*	£250	30·00
		c. *Pale orange*	£225	30·00
		ca. Imperf between (horiz pair)		
		x. Wmk reversed	£275	60·00

(b) P 14

15	1	(1d.) black (6.76)	50·00	22·00
		a. Imperf between (horiz pair)		
		x. Wmk reversed	50·00	22·00
16		(4d.) yellow (6.76)	£130	24·00
		a. *Olive-yellow*	£325	£100
		w. Wmk inverted		
		x. Wmk reversed	£130	24·00
17		(6d.) mauve (6.76)	£120	42·00
		a. *Pale lilac*	£120	22·00
		b. *Violet*	£250	70·00
		x. Wmk reversed	—	55·00
18		(1s.) orange (10.76)	£250	24·00
		a. *Deep orange*	£170	16·00
		w. Wmk inverted	—	£110
		x. Wmk reversed	£190	25·00

All four values exist imperforate from proof sheets.



HALFPENNY 2½ PENCE

(3) (4) 5

1881 (Sept). Surch with T **3** or **4**. Wmk Crown CC. P 14.

23	1	½d. green	85·00	£120
		x. Wmk reversed	—	£190
24		2½d. brown-red	60·00	28·00

The (1d.) black is known surcharged "1d." in violet ink by hand, but there is no evidence that this was done officially.

1882–84. Surch as T **3**. Wmk Crown CA.

(a) P 14

25	1	½d. green (1882)	32·00	48·00
26		1d. black (C.)	48·00	16·00
		a. Bisected (on cover)	†	—
27		4d. yellow	£300	24·00
28		6d. violet	50·00	50·00
29		1s. orange	£275	£170

(b) P 12

30	1	4d. yellow	£275	28·00

Deep blue stamps, wmk Crown CA, perf 14 or 12 are fiscals from which the overprint "THREE PENCE—REVENUE" or "REVENUE" has been fraudulently removed.

(Typo D.L.R.)

1883 (6 July)–**86**. Die I. Wmk Crown CA. P 14.

31	5	½d. dull green	17·00	10·00
		a. Top left triangle detached	£450	
32		1d. carmine-rose	55·00	19·00
33		2½d. blue	75·00	3·00
		a. Top left triangle detached	£1000	£190
34		4d. brown (1885)	50·00	1·25
		a. Top left triangle detached	£850	£140
35		6d. lilac (1886)	£300	£200
36		1s. orange-brown (1885)	£400	£160
31/6 *Set of 6*			£800	£350

The 4d. and 6d. exist imperforate from proof sheets.

For illustration of "top left triangle detached" variety on this and the following issue see above No. 21 of Antigua.

1886–87. Die I. Wmk Crown CA. P 14.

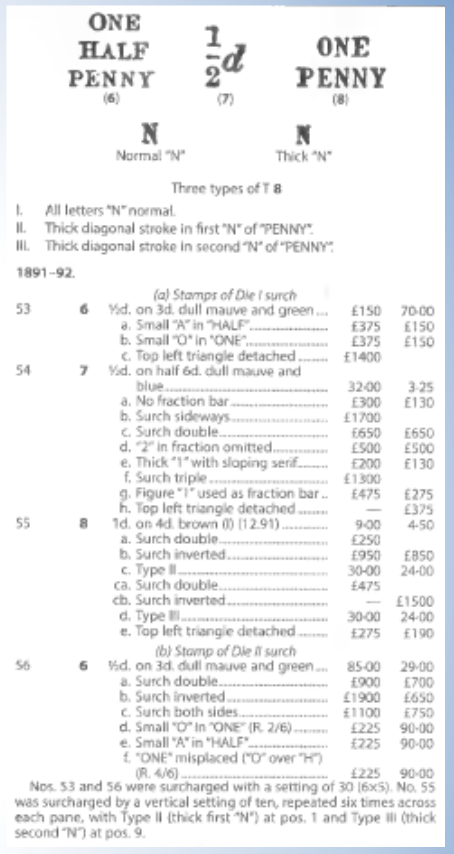
39	5	1d. dull mauve	16·00	6·00
		a. Top left triangle detached	£400	£225
40		3d. dull mauve and green	£120	20·00
		a. Top left triangle detached	£1200	£475
41		6d. dull mauve and blue (1887)	7·50	20·00
		a. Top left triangle detached	£275	£400
42		1s. dull mauve and red (1887)	£120	48·00
		a. Top left triangle detached	£1300	£750
39/42 *Set of 4*			£225	85·00
39s/42s Optd "SPECIMEN" *Set of 4*			£225	

The 1d. exists imperforate from proof sheets.

1891–98. Die II. Wmk Crown CA. P 14.

43	5	½d. dull green	4·00	1·00
		w. Wmk inverted	£500	
44		1d. dull mauve	7·00	30
45		2d. ultramarine and orange (1898)	6·00	1·25
46		2½d. ultramarine	12·00	1·00
47		3d. dull mauve and green	9·00	5·50
48		4d. brown	8·00	3·00
49		6d. dull mauve and blue	40·00	24·00
50		1s. dull mauve and red	13·00	5·50
51		5s. dull mauve and orange	55·00	£160
52		10s. dull mauve and black	95·00	£160
43/52 *Set of 10*			£200	£325
45s, 51s/2s Optd "SPECIMEN" *Set of 3*			£120	

For description and illustration of differences between Die I and Die II see Introduction.



ONE HALF PENNY (6) | ½d (7) | ONE PENNY (8)

N Normal "N" | N Thick "N"

Three types of T **8**

I. All letters "N" normal.
II. Thick diagonal stroke in first "N" of "PENNY".
III. Thick diagonal stroke in second "N" of "PENNY".

1891–92.

(a) Stamps of Die I surch

53	6	½d. on 3d. dull mauve and green	£150	70·00
		a. Small "A" in "HALF"	£375	£150
		b. Small "O" in "ONE"	£375	£150
		c. Top left triangle detached	£1400	
54	7	½d. on half 6d. dull mauve and blue	32·00	3·25
		a. No fraction bar	£300	£130
		b. Surch sideways	£1700	
		c. Surch double	£650	£650
		d. "2" in fraction omitted	£500	£500
		e. Thick "1" with sloping serif	£200	£130
		f. Surch triple	£1300	
		g. Figure "1" used as fraction bar	£475	£275
		h. Top left triangle detached	—	£375
55	8	1d. on 4d. brown (I) (12.91)	9·00	4·50
		a. Surch double	£250	
		b. Surch inverted	£950	£850
		c. Type II	30·00	24·00
		ca. Surch double	£475	
		cb. Surch inverted	—	£1500
		d. Type III	30·00	24·00
		e. Top left triangle detached	£275	£190

(b) Stamp of Die II surch

56	6	½d. on 3d. dull mauve and green	85·00	29·00
		a. Surch double	£900	£700
		b. Surch inverted	£1900	£650
		c. Surch both sides	£1100	£750
		d. Small "O" in "ONE" (R. 2/6)	£225	90·00
		e. Small "A" in "HALF"	£225	90·00
		f. "ONE" misplaced ("O" over "H") (R. 4/6)	£225	90·00

Nos. 53 and 56 were surcharged with a setting of 30 (6x5). No. 55 was surcharged by a vertical setting of ten, repeated six times across each pane, with Type II (thick first "N") at pos. 1 and Type III (thick second "N") at pos. 9.

Although difficult to read here, it's much more detailed than Scott's, listing shades and varieties of most issues.

Beware of fakes and forgeries of classic St. Lucia stamps.

Spiro forgery

Oneglia forgery

Spiro forgery

Oneglia forgery

Spiro forgery

Taylor forgery

Forgery

Sperati forgery

A total of 40 stamps were issued under Queen Victoria's reign for the colony of St. Lucia, all of which carried her portrait. Classic designs never go out of style!

The End

Much information and several images used came from the November 2014 Royal Philatelic Society London presentation PDF on St. Lucia by John Keegan here.