

Vera Trinder Ltd – review courtesy of David Rennie

STANLEY GIBBONS COMMONWEALTH & BRITISH EMPIRE STAMPS 1840-

1970: 2012 Edition Publ. Stanley Gibbons Publications, 7 Parkside, Christchurch Road, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH Received 19th September 2011 ISBN 978-0-85259-813-9 £77.50

“When times are hard, (i.e. the financial markets, weak currencies etc.), stamps are good” is as true as ever. This catalogue includes the first Empire items to be priced at £1 million and £1.2million, namely the celebrated Mauritius 1d and 2d Post Office items. The editor comments on *“the sheer number of price changes, which are almost exclusively in an upward direction...the fact that they affect almost all areas and periods...and the scale of these increases; with prices doubling, trebling or even more..”* More collectors, the search for better quality material, all add to the mix.

As always first read the Editor’s Preface on page vii, then, look at the list of numbers added since the last edition on page xi.

Where price increases are mentioned you will find that India, Ceylon, Malaya and South East Asia are noted; Southern Africa including the Rhodesias, especially Mafeking where every single stamp has increased. In the West Indies; British Guiana, Dominica, Jamaica, Montserrat and Turks & Caicos are highlighted; in the Pacific it is Cook Islands, Fiji, French issues of New Hebrides, Samoa and Tonga, whilst other island colonies such as Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Malta, Mauritius and Seychelles are not to be left out. There are many others. Editorial improvements include new illustrations for Victoria Stamp duty issues, the Australia 6d Kangaroo with the “retouched E”, the Newfoundland 1928-31 Publicity series, and Tonga early varieties. The two plates for 1966 Papua New Guinea values are listed separately, as are the Canadian 1967 Centennials with Hybrite paper and later commemoratives which have notes on identification. There are revised dates for British Post Offices in Levant.

There is a newly priced listing of Indian stamps with “FF” cancels used during the 1867-8 military expedition in Abyssinia. The unissued Jamaica 6d of 1921 is now given full listing with prices for unused and Specimen overprinted copies; (the other issues of 1921 and 1923 have revised numbers as a result).

New plate, watermark or other varieties have been added in over 70 countries, resulting in over 200 new SG numbers.

With so many changes and revisions, this year’s edition is even more essential than usual to both dealer and collector alike.