

# Finding a Treasure Trove of Information

Part 3

by Paul and Barbara Kayfetz

## THE 1926 – 1930 GEORGE V DEFINITIVE

### 1926 “Postage” Set

The artist's original engraved steel plate for the 1926 “Postage” issue is present (Photo No 35). The die shows the entire stamp, with the head, but is blank in the value area. It is contained in a wrapper which is labeled: “NO 10641/Malta Postage Stamp/(blank)”. The die is cut into a 5mm thick steel plate. It is 88mm wide and 96mm high. The image of the stamp is reversed, but the number of the die at the top of the plate reads correctly: “10641”. The die appears to be plated with nickel. It has been defaced with two deep horizontal lines scribed across it. The image area is deeply corroded.

The artist's engraving for a relief plate is similar in configuration to the image on the printing plate. The design is reversed left-to-right. Areas which will be dark are raised. Areas, such as the word “POSTAGE” in this design are cut out below the surface level.

There is also a die containing the image of the head vignette. This die is on a similar steel plate 25mm wide and 82mm high. It contains the number: “10690” at the top. There are registration marks scribed near the middle of each side of the plate and other marks scribed nearby but offset from the middle. There are horizontal lines almost entirely across the die at points midway between the image and the top and the image and the bottom. There is a round protrusion from a rivet which has been cut off. This protrusion is near the bottom center of the die. The image has been defaced with a single scribed line.

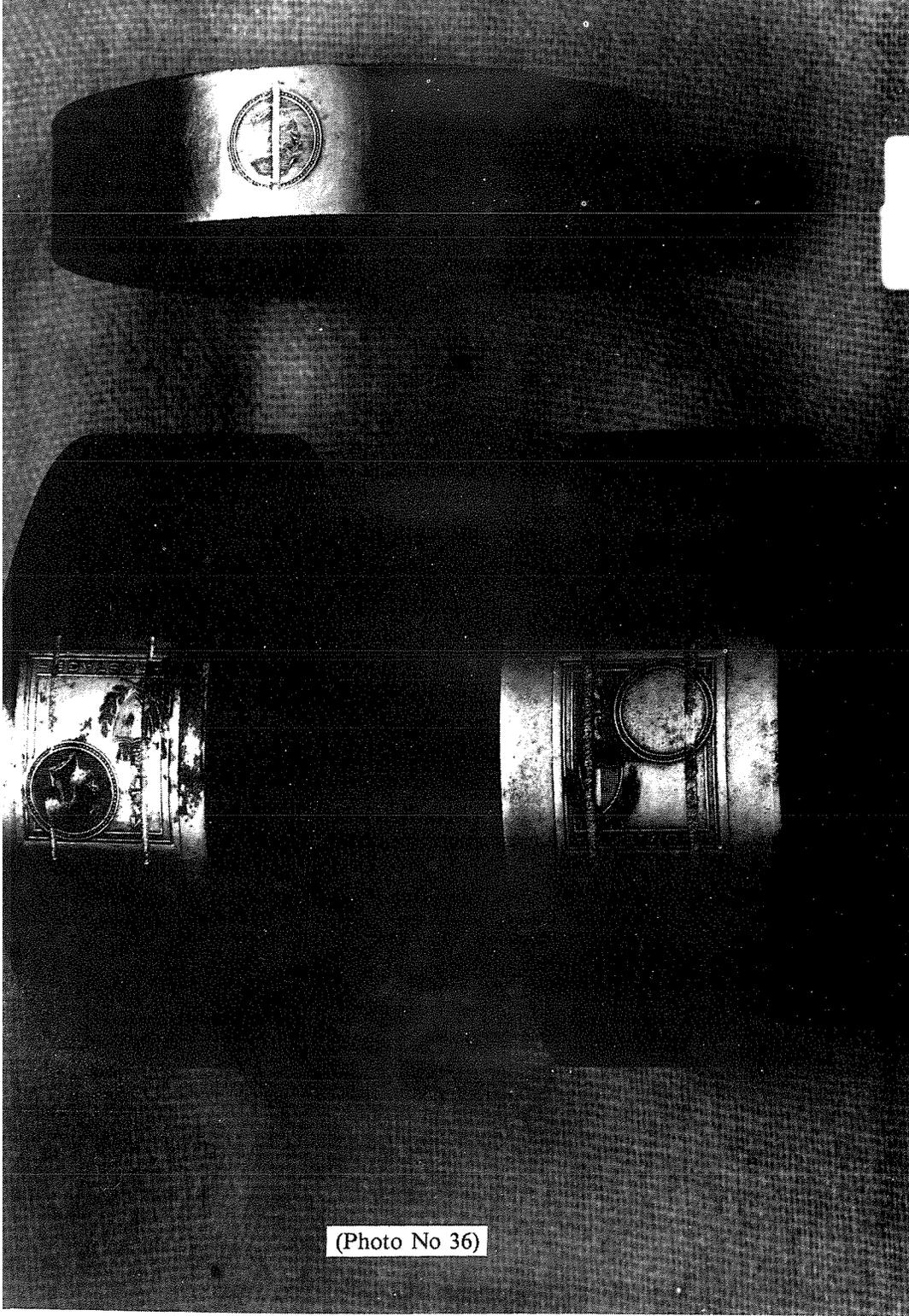
There is a transfer roller of the entire stamp with blank duty and blank portrait area (Photo No 36). On one side the roller contains the punched inscription: “10641”. On the other side it contains the number: “4484”. The roller is 27mm wide. It is 79mm in diameter. The center hole is 27mm in diameter. The roller is made of steel and appears to be nickel plated. The roller was oiled and wrapped in a tissue.

The transfer roller's image is taken from the artist's engraved die. The process involves first hardening the soft steel die through heating in a furnace containing potassium cyanide followed by a plunge into a cooling liquid. A blank soft steel transfer roller is rocked back and forth on the hardened die under great pressure until the image is impressed on the roller. The transfer roller is then hardened. The hardened transfer roller can then be used to rock the image onto other artist's steel dies so that variations such as different denominations can be effected. Ultimately, the final design is rocked from a transfer roller onto a plate from which the molds for the printing plates are made.

The transfer roller in this instance contains a correct reading image of the stamp. It is raised in the areas, such as the word “POSTAGE”, where the stamp will carry no ink. This particular transfer roller is an intermediate step since only a portion of the background horizontal lines are scribed. Presumably from this roller artist's dies would be made on which the values were inscribed for the two-colour stamps of this issue. The portrait would be printed from plates made from the third roller in this group.



(Photo No 35)



(Photo No 36)

A similar transfer roller bearing the image of the stamp with the portrait but without the denomination or any horizontal lines in the central background area is present. It differs also in being 33mm wide, and in bearing the number: "4311" on the side opposite the die number. This is probably an intermediate step for the production of the various single-colour stamps in this set.

A transfer roller bearing the image of the head is the third in this group. It is 17mm in width. It bears the number: "10641" on one side and "4325" on the other side.

Each of the transfer rollers has been defaced with one or two lines scribed through the image.

## 1930 "Postage & Revenue" Set

### Artist's Dies (Photo No. 37)

1/4d – The artist's die for this stamp is on a 5mm thick steel plate which has been nickel coated. The plate is 81mm wide and 89mm high. It contains the number: "12591" at the top. The stamp image is reversed left-to-right; the die number reads correctly. There is a 3mm diameter hole bored through the bottom of the die. (Such holes allowed hooked implements to be utilized during hardening and electroplating steps.) This die has been defaced with two lines scribed through it.

1/2d – This die is similar but bears the number: "12592". A hole similar to that on the 1/4d is bored through the top of the die in the area of the stamped die number.

1d – This similar die bears number: "12597" at the top and has the hole at the bottom.

1 – 1/2d – This bears number: "12600" and has no hole.

2d – This bears the number: "12598" and has no hole.

2 – 1/2d (Photo No. 38) – This bears the number: "12695" and has a hole at the bottom.

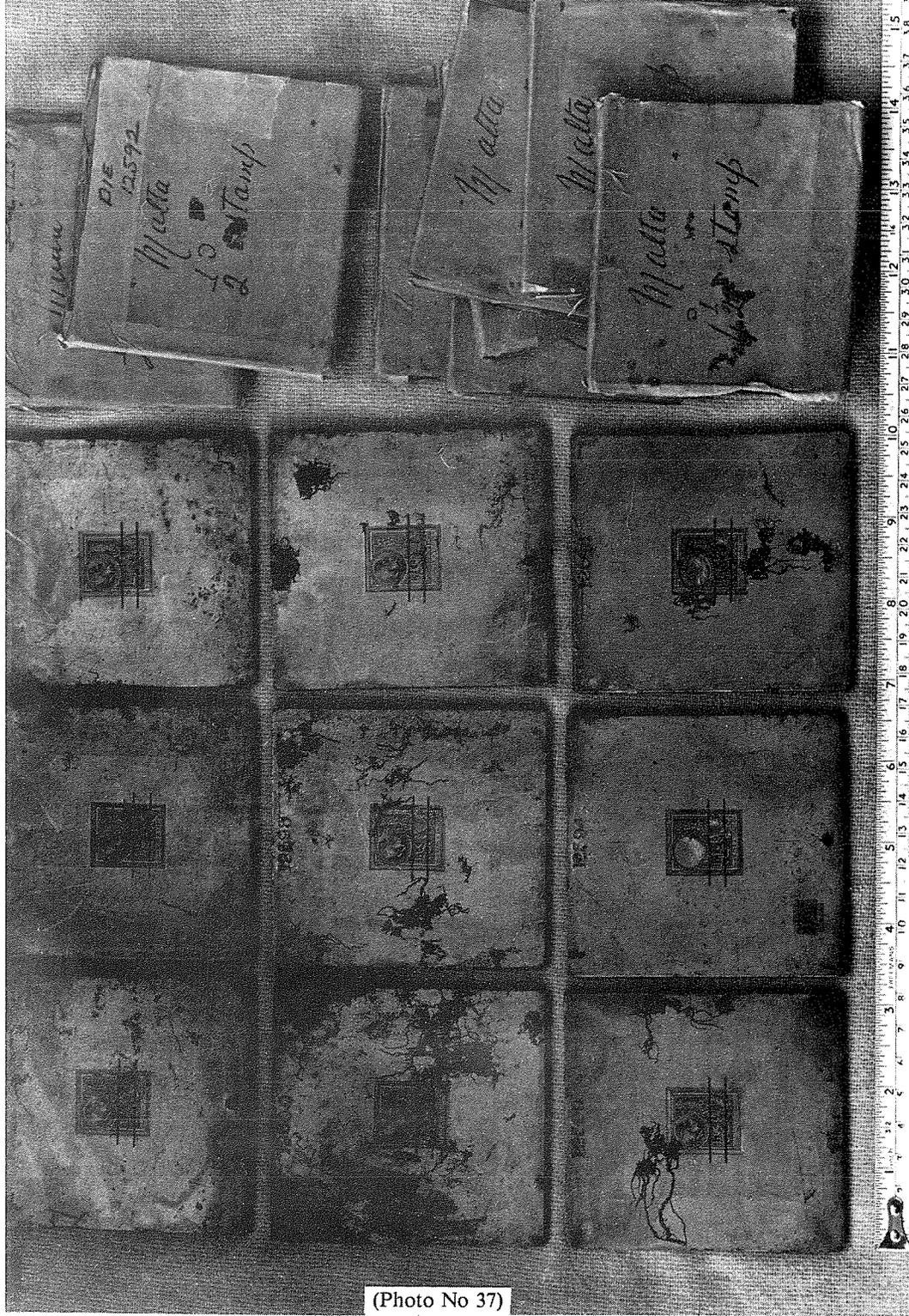
3d – This die is number: "12599". It has no hole.

4d (Photo No. 38) – This bears the number: "12594". It has a hole at the bottom. It has an area on the lower left where cross scribing has been done in a patch approximately 10mm × 10mm. This die contains a blank indentation in the portrait area (since it is a two-colour stamp).

4 – 1/2d – This die is number: "12596". It has a hole in the bottom. The portrait areas is a blank recessed area.

### Thin Molds

(Photos 38 & 39) – These molds are 1 to 2mm thick. Their edges are curled and rough with a puddling of what had been molten metal showing at the edges and on the backs. The front is shiny and contains the image in reverse. The intended image appears through the back (not in reverse). The face side has been defaced with two scribes through each stamp. Values are present for the 1/2d through the 6d. The die numbers are the same as those given for the artist's dies above. The 6d, for which there was no artist's die, does not contain a die number. On each of these molds a protrusion is round and 4mm in diameter appears at precisely the location of the hold on the artist's dies. One of the molds, that of the 2 – 1/2d value, shows a border around the stamp apparently caused by use of a drill on a prior stage. (See Photo No. 38.)



DIE  
12592

Malta

10 1/2 stamp

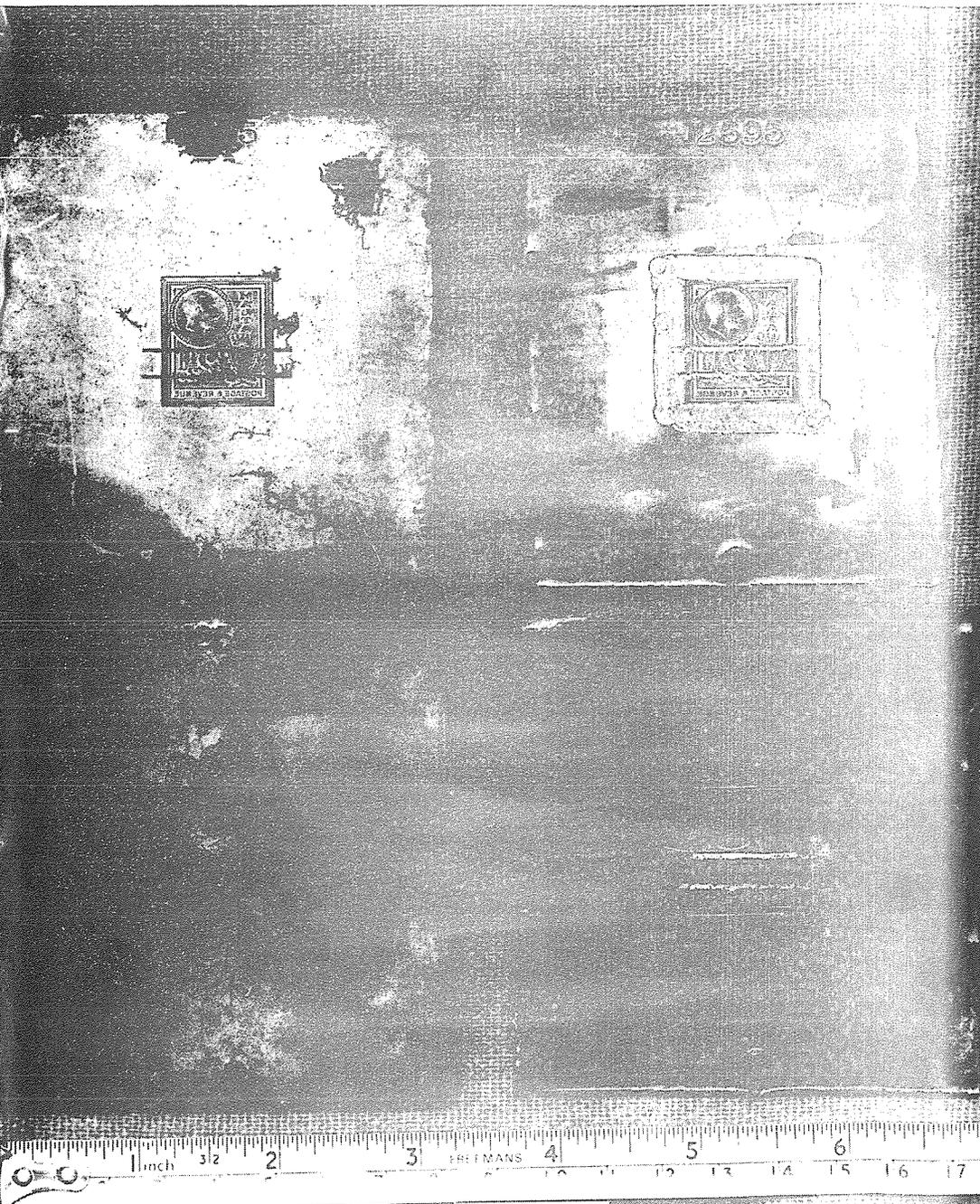
Malta

Malta

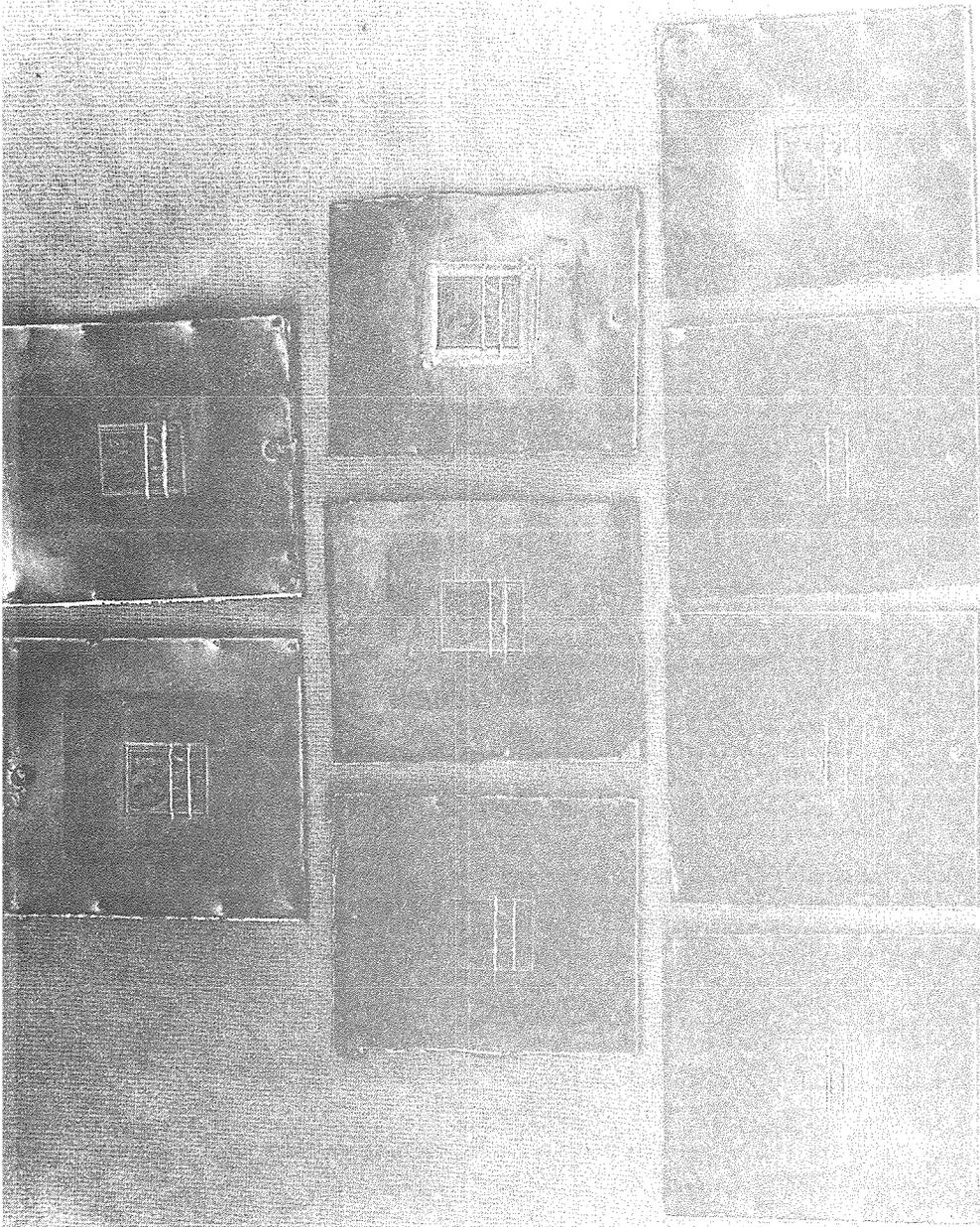
Malta

1/2 stamp

(Photo No 37)



(Photo No 38)



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(Photo No 39)

The retired De La Rue printer contacted through Mr. Robson Lowe described these as "zincos". He indicated that only the 2-1/2d has been prepared for further use. Through use of a router on the relief version (now called an "alto") between the dies and the zincos. The shoulder allows a gutter (for perforation) to be formed. The printer believes the other zincos were spares not yet prepared for further use.

### **Individual Nickel or Zinc Dies**

(Photo No. 40) – Stamp sized dies 1mm thick are present for this issue. There are two of these for the 1/4d, and one each for the 1d through 6d. The 4d, 4-1/2d, and 6d contain blank, recessed blank areas where the portrait would normally be. The image is contained in reverse on each. The retired printer indicates these are spares used in repair damaged cliches.

### **Key Plate for the Pence Values**

(Photo No. 41) – There is a relief steel plate 4mm thick containing 120 vignettes of the head of King George V. There is a copper coating on the face of the steel plate but an extremely thick layer of corrosion atop this renders the image almost impossible to see. Stamped in the plate is the legend: "Key Plate" with a blank area after the word "Plate" which has been manually scraped from the surface to a depth of 1/2mm obliterating whatever word had been there. At the top of the plate there is punched the numeral "1" in a circle. This appears in a lower area of the surrounded where it would not print. The plate is 279mm wide and 274mm high. The images are in the spacing and format of this issue. A single line defacing the image has been scribed through all 120 vignette heads.

### **Copper Molds of Pence Printing Plates**

A copper mold coated with a yellowish-silver metal exists for each of the printing plates. The image reads correctly. In all cases two lines have been scribed through each row of stamps defacing the plate. These were the masters (each sometimes called the matrix) used to produce the printing plates.

1/4d (Photo No. 42) – The mold consists of 120 images in the plate layout with the row of vertical pillar lines one stamp high above the top row of stamps. There are no marginal or other notations nor any plate numbers.

1/2d (Photo No. 43) – Same as above.

1d (Photo No. 44) – Same as above.

1-1/2d (Photo No. 45) – Same as above.

2d (Photo No. 46) – Same as above except that the border is plain above the top row of stamp and no vertical pillar lines are present.

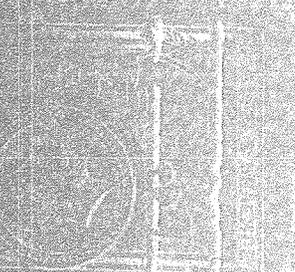
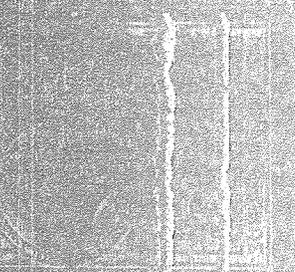
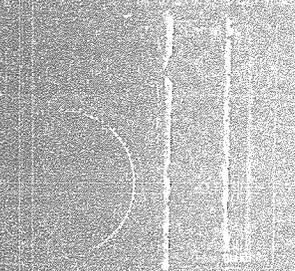
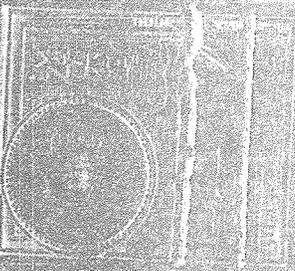
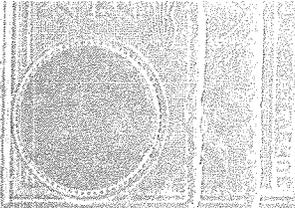
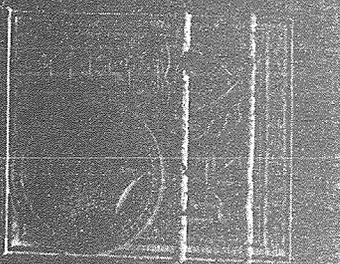
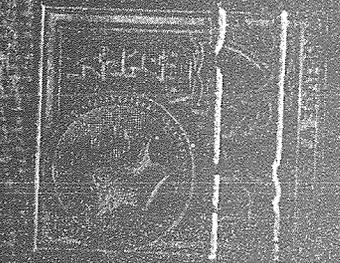
2-1/2d (Photo No. 47) – As 1/2d above.

3d (Photo No. 48) – As 1/2d above.

4d (Photo No. 49) – This mold is as above except that the vignette area is raised and blank. There are no pillar lines in the border above the top row of stamps.

4-1/2d (Photo No. 50) – As 4d above.

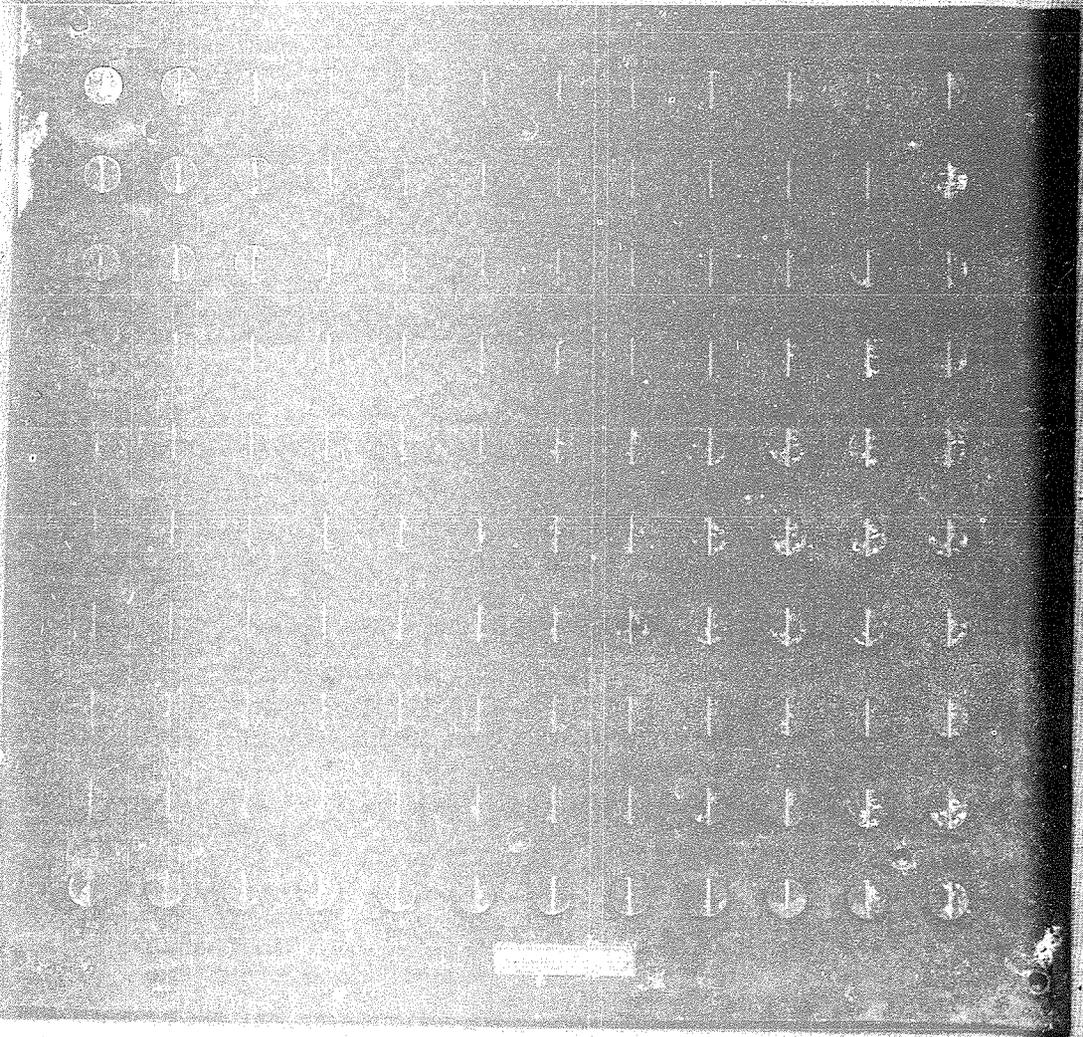
6d (Photo No. 51) – As 4d above.



FREEMANS 4 5 6 7

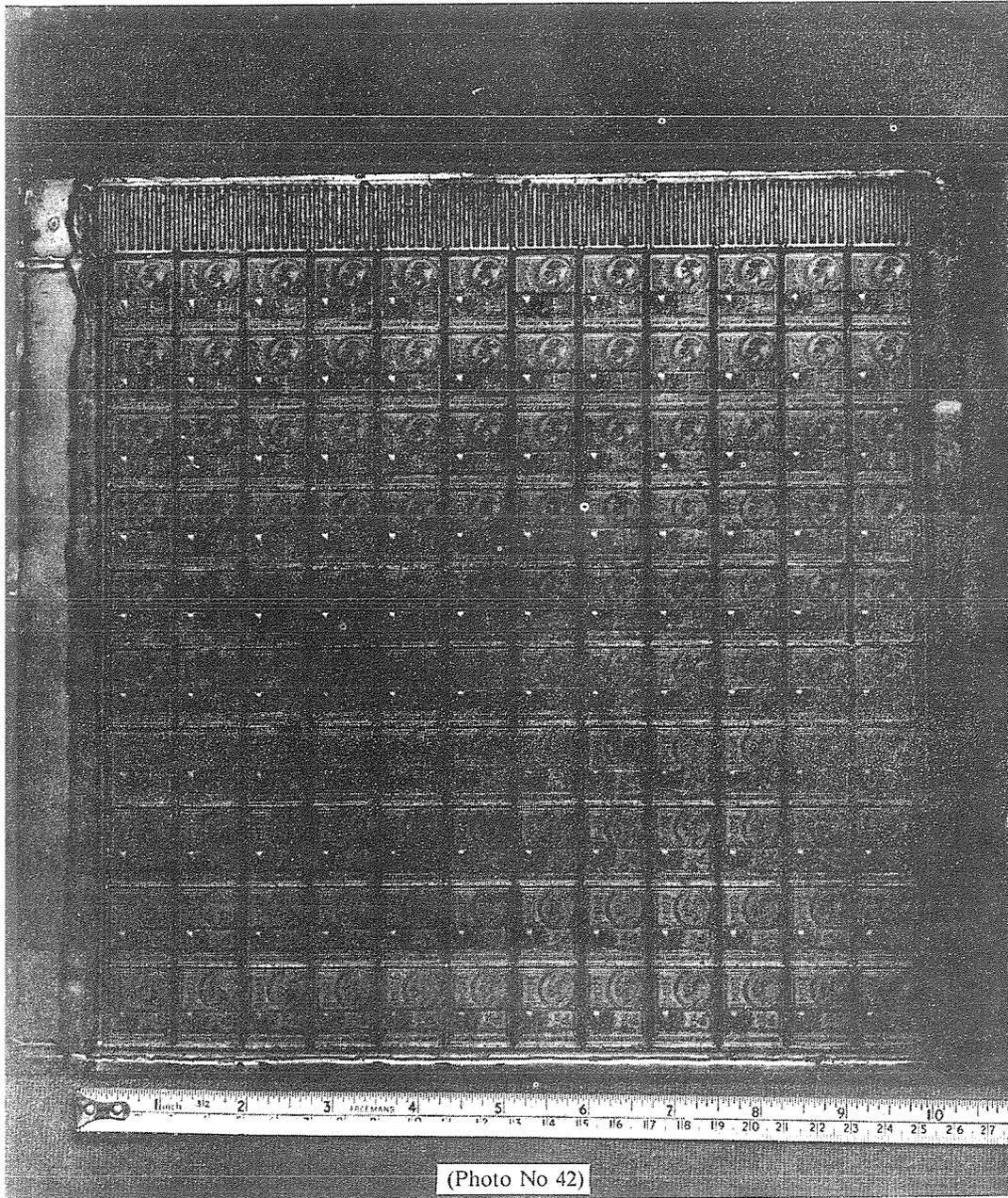


(Photo No 40)

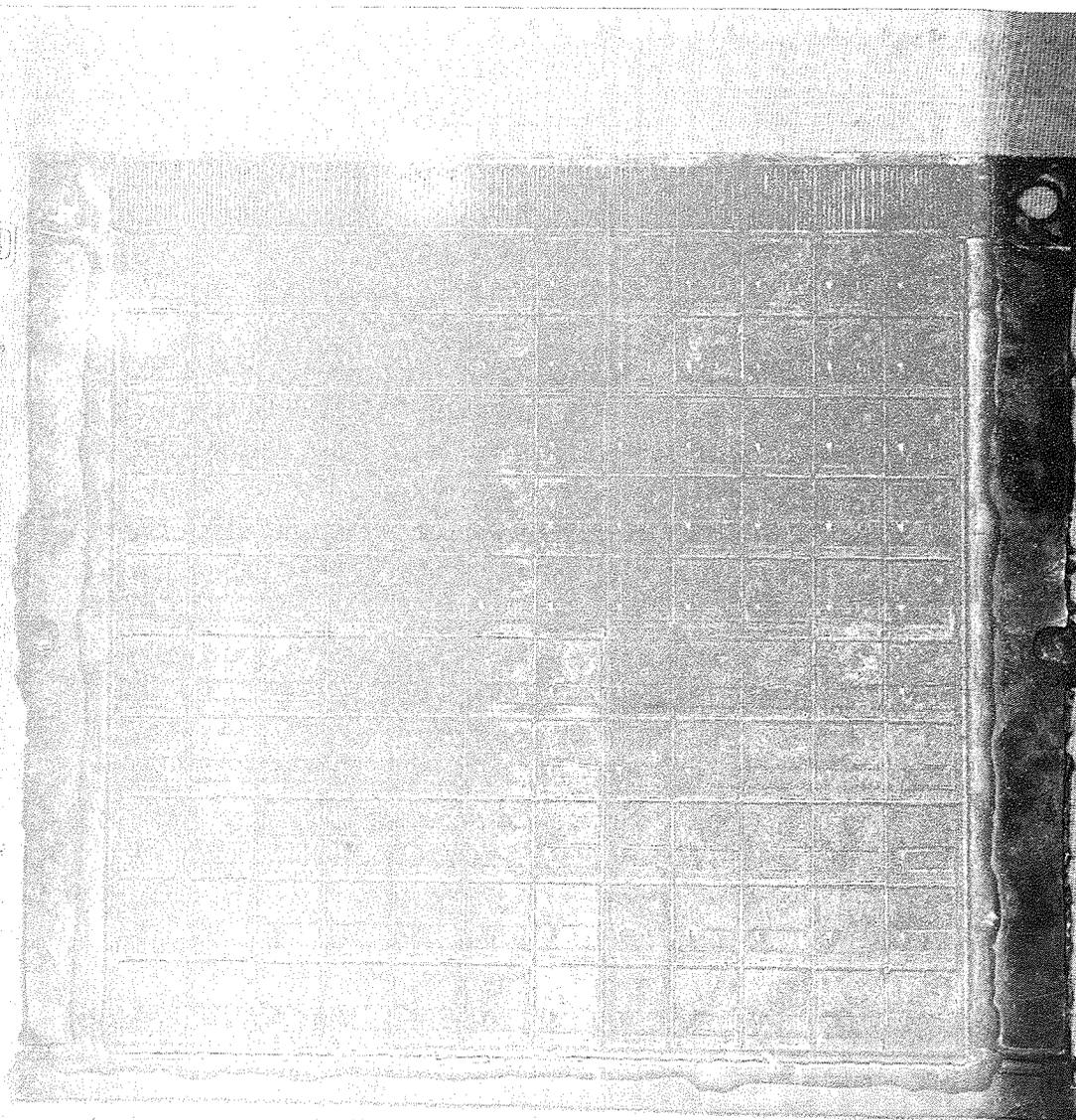


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

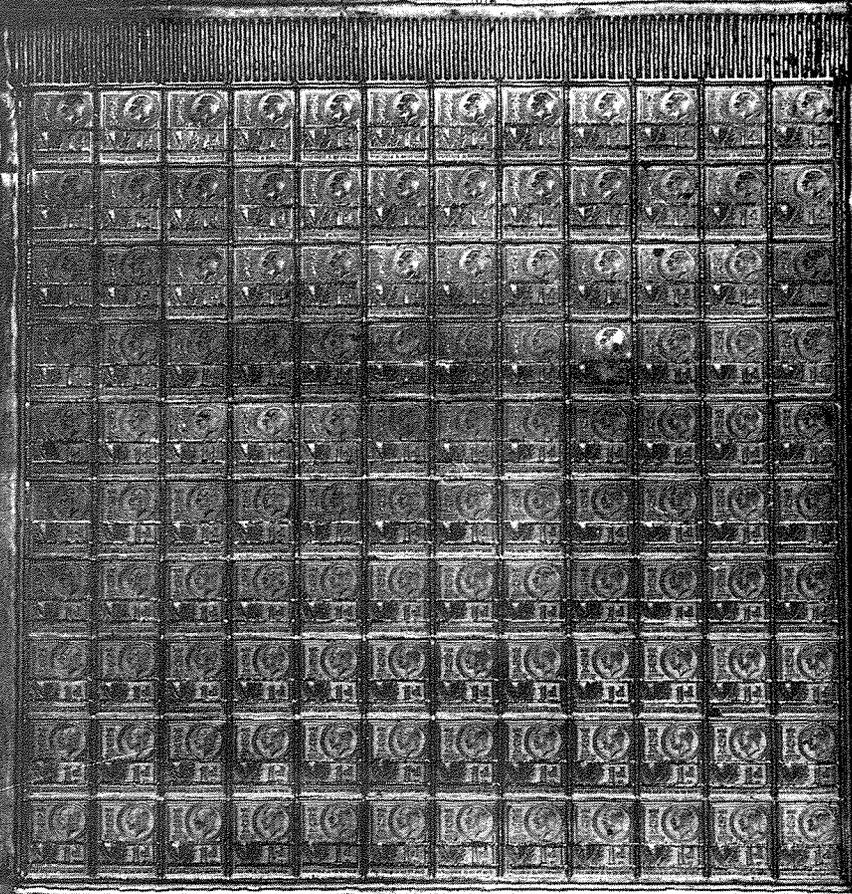
(Photo No 41)



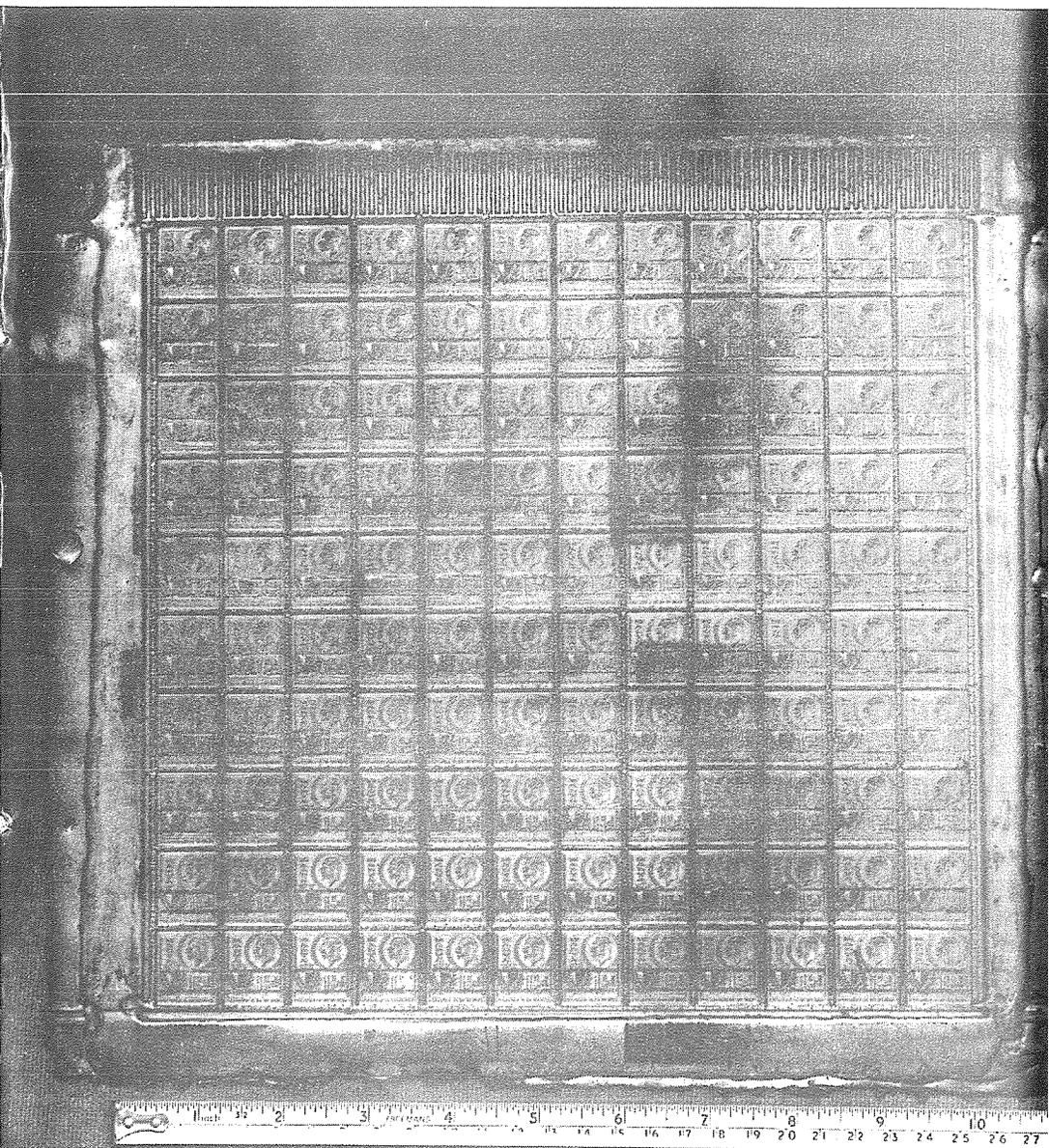
(Photo No 42)



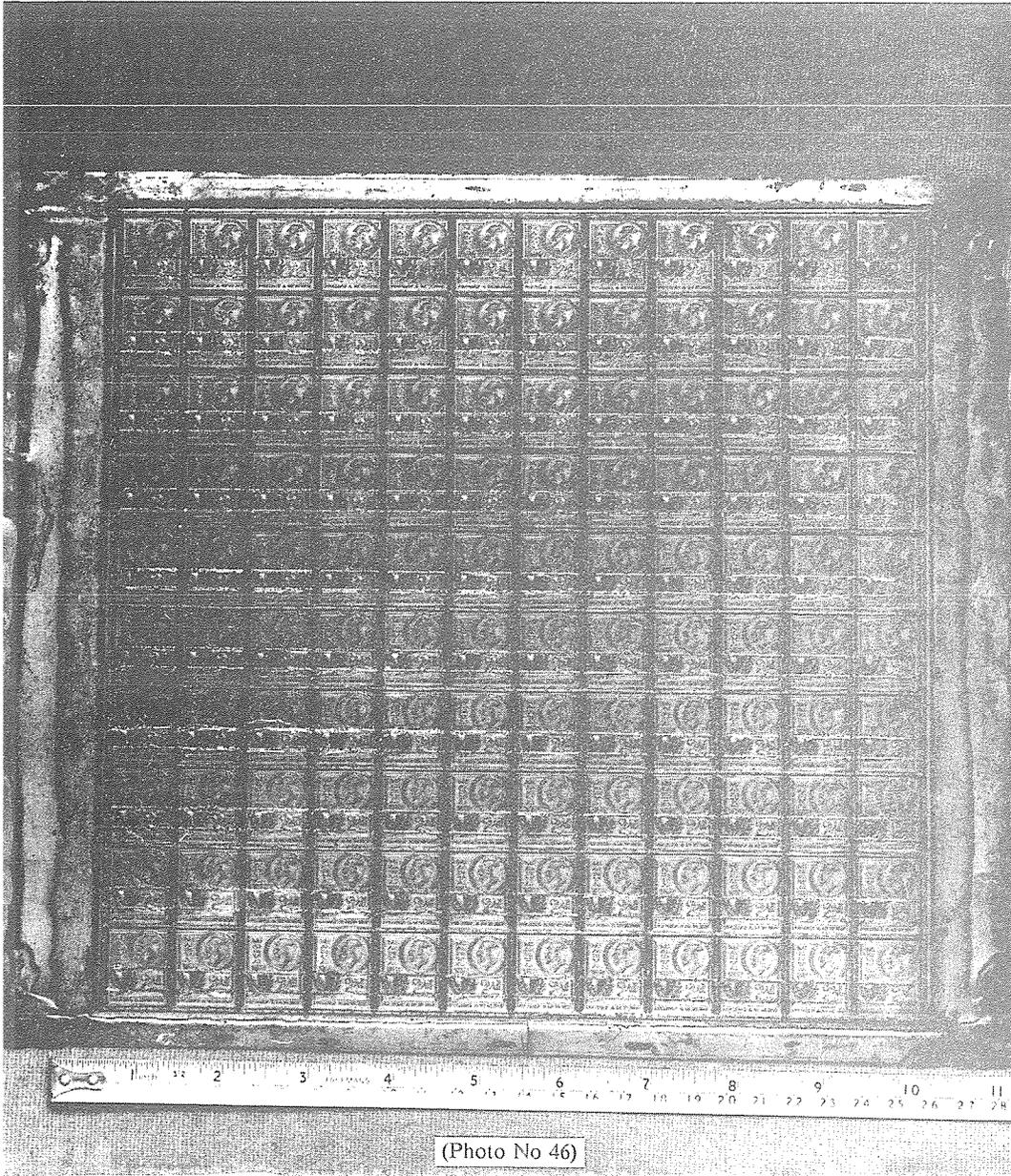
(Photo No 43)



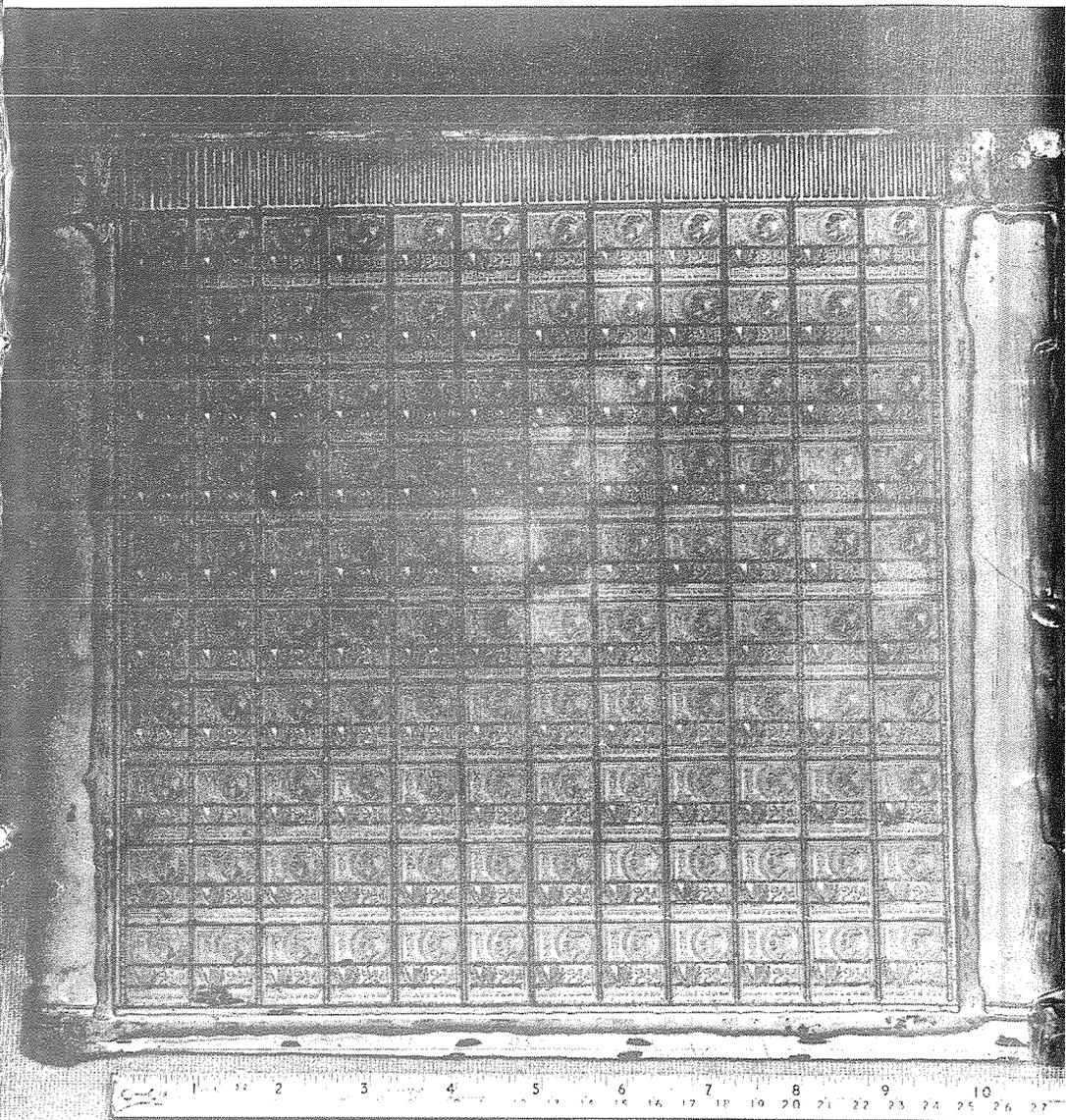
(Photo No 44)



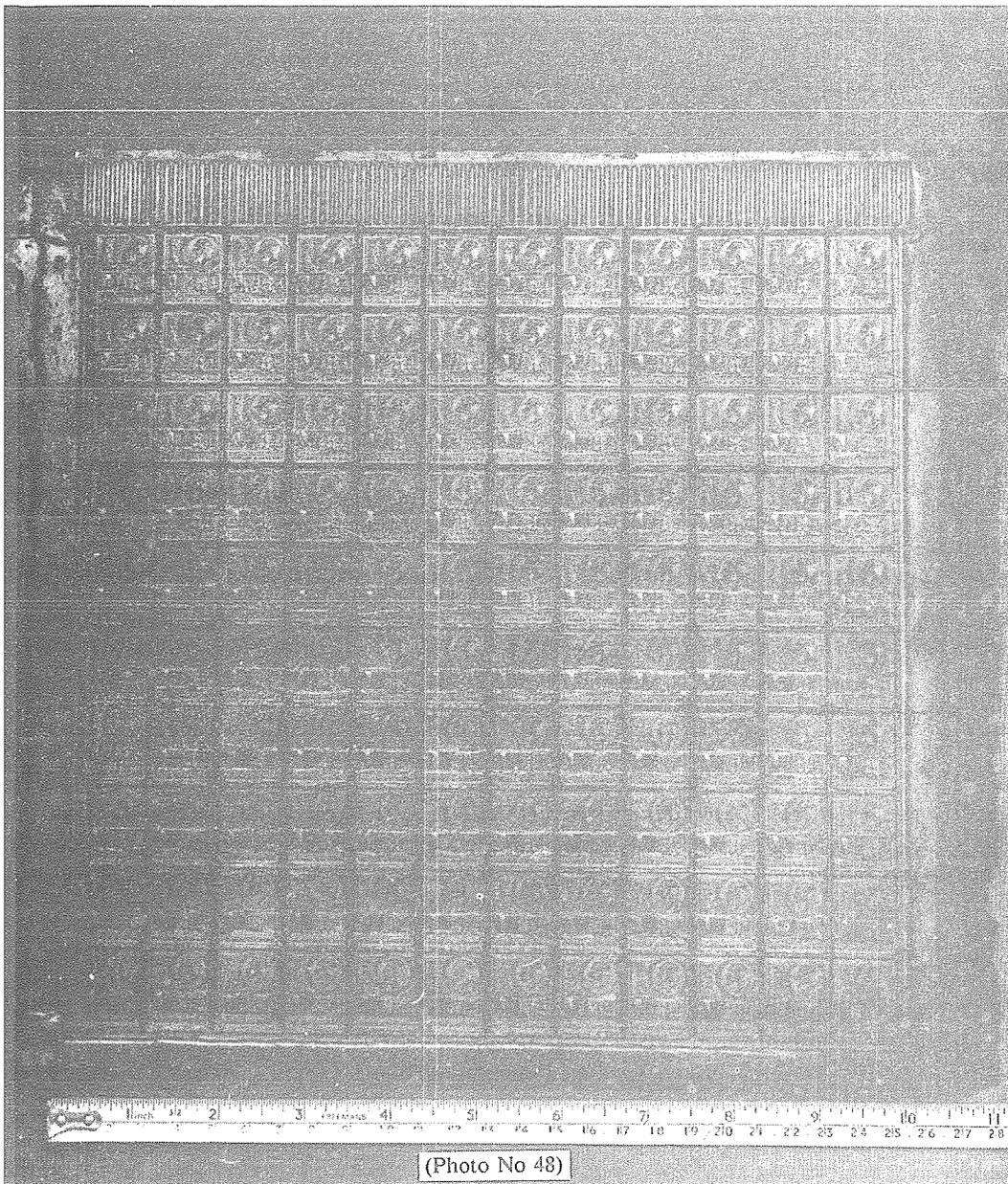
(Photo No 45)



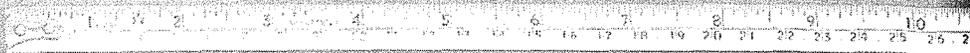
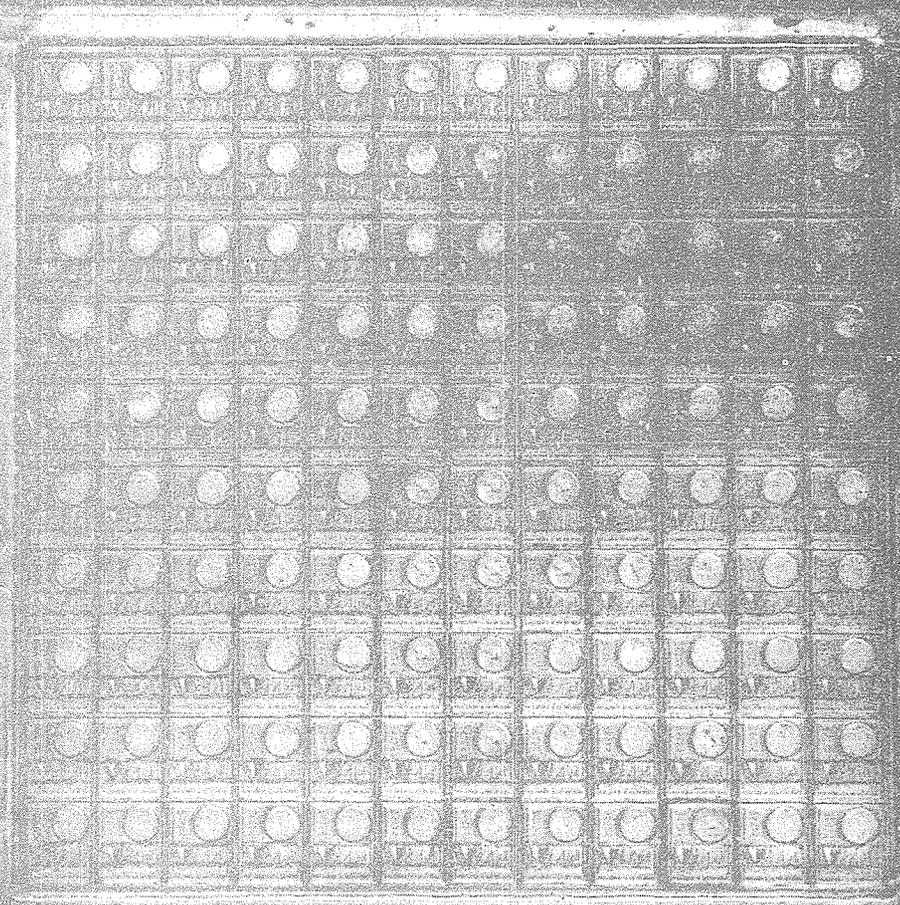
(Photo No 46)



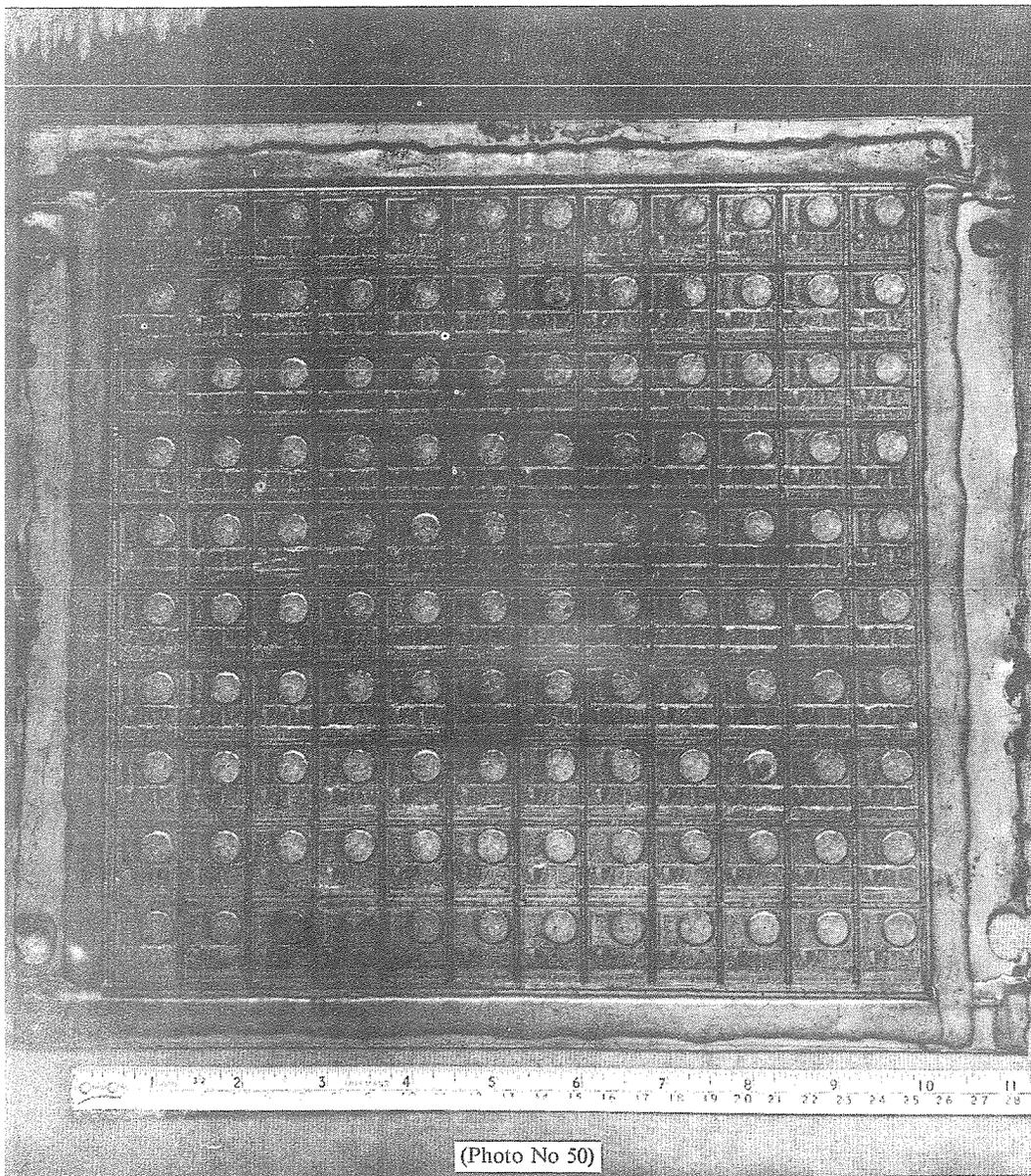
(Photo No 47)



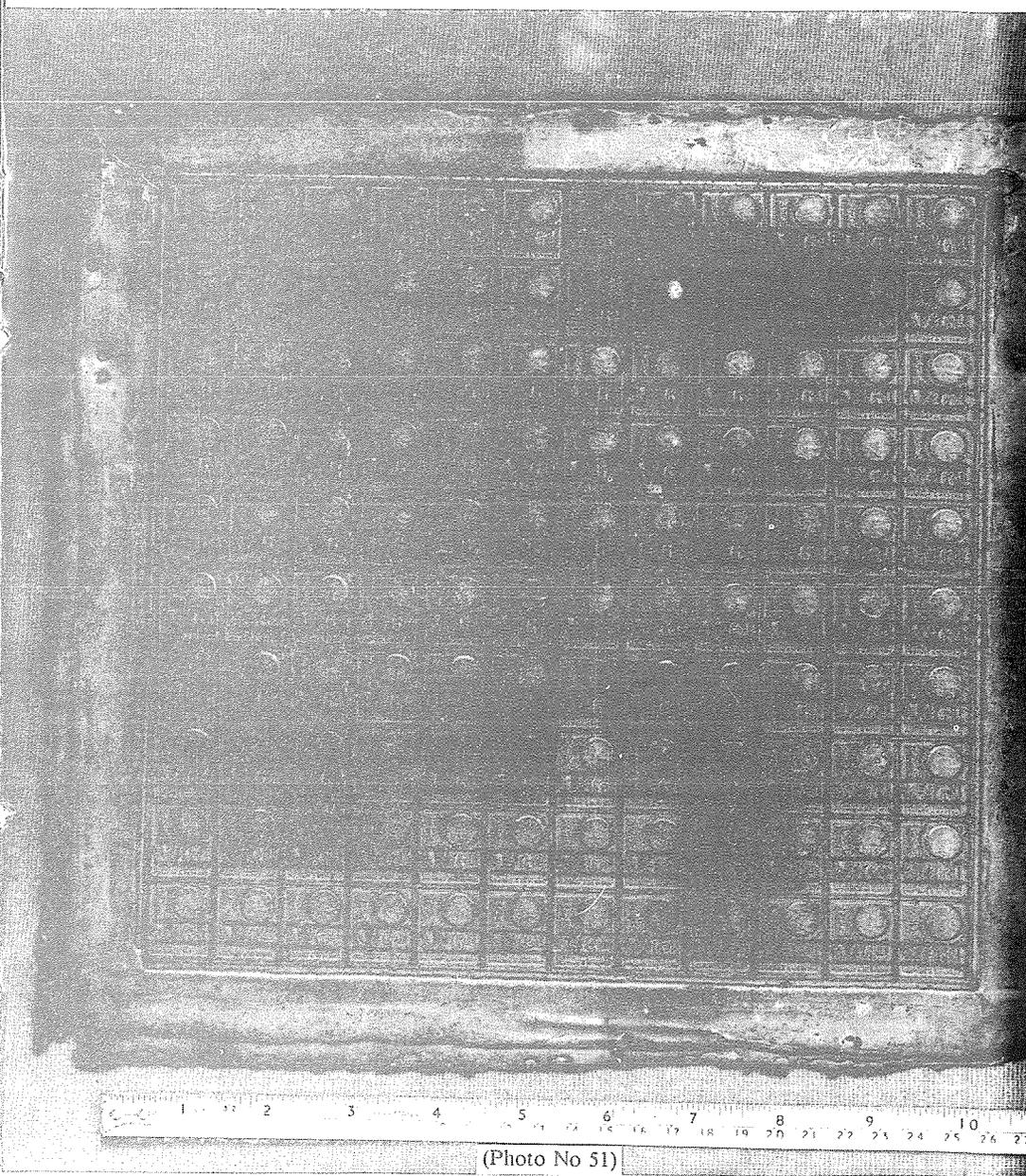
(Photo No 48)



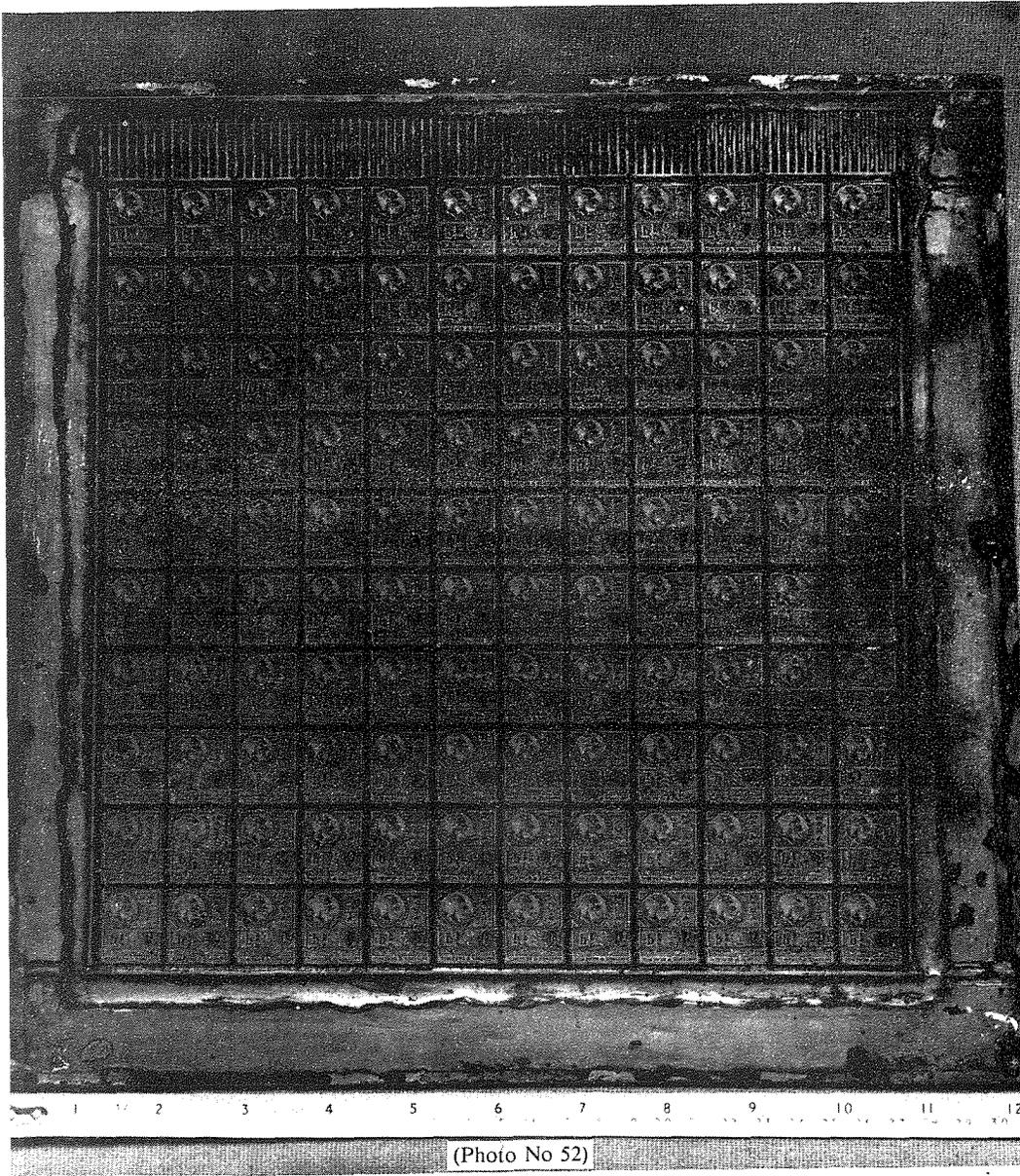
(Photo No 49)



(Photo No 50)



(Photo No 51)



(Photo No 52)

## Printing Plates for Pence Issues

1/4d (Photo No. 52) – This is a steel relief printing plate 4mm thick with a raised copper image on the surface and a yellow/silver metallic coating (nickel?) atop the copper. There are 120 images in a single pane with 10 rows of 12 stamps. The images are reversed left-to-right. Above the top row is a band of vertical stripes one stamp high. There is a single Jubilee Line around the entire sheet. It is broken at each corner and at the top between each stamp. There are no marginal marks of any sort. There is a border of metal approximately 30mm around the image area on both sides and the bottom. A similar sized border at the top contains the vertical stripes. The image has been defaced with a pair of scratches through each stamp.

(Photo No. 53) – A second set of printing plates exists. This consists of a bottom pane and a top pane which are separate but appear to have been used together affixed to a common backing which is no longer present. The bottom pane is similar to that described above with the following exceptions:

- A. The border has been cut down so that it is approximately 12mm wide at each side and 15mm wide at the bottom; and,
- B. The plate numbers “1” in a solid colour with a solid ring around them has been braised or soldered into the bottom margin mid-way between first and second stamps at each end of the bottom row; and,
- C. The top margin contains the vertical stripes described earlier. However, the plate has been cut or broken off precisely across the top of the stripes.

(Photo No. 54) – The top half of this pair of plates is generally as described immediately above. The plate numbers “1” have been soldered into the upper margin between the first and second stamps of each end of the top row. The lower left corner stamp (row 10, No. 12) in the top pane has been cut out and replaced with a new cliché which is soldered or welded into the plate. The entire thickness of the plate is replaced. (See Photo 90 for a view of this type of replacement from the back of a plate.)

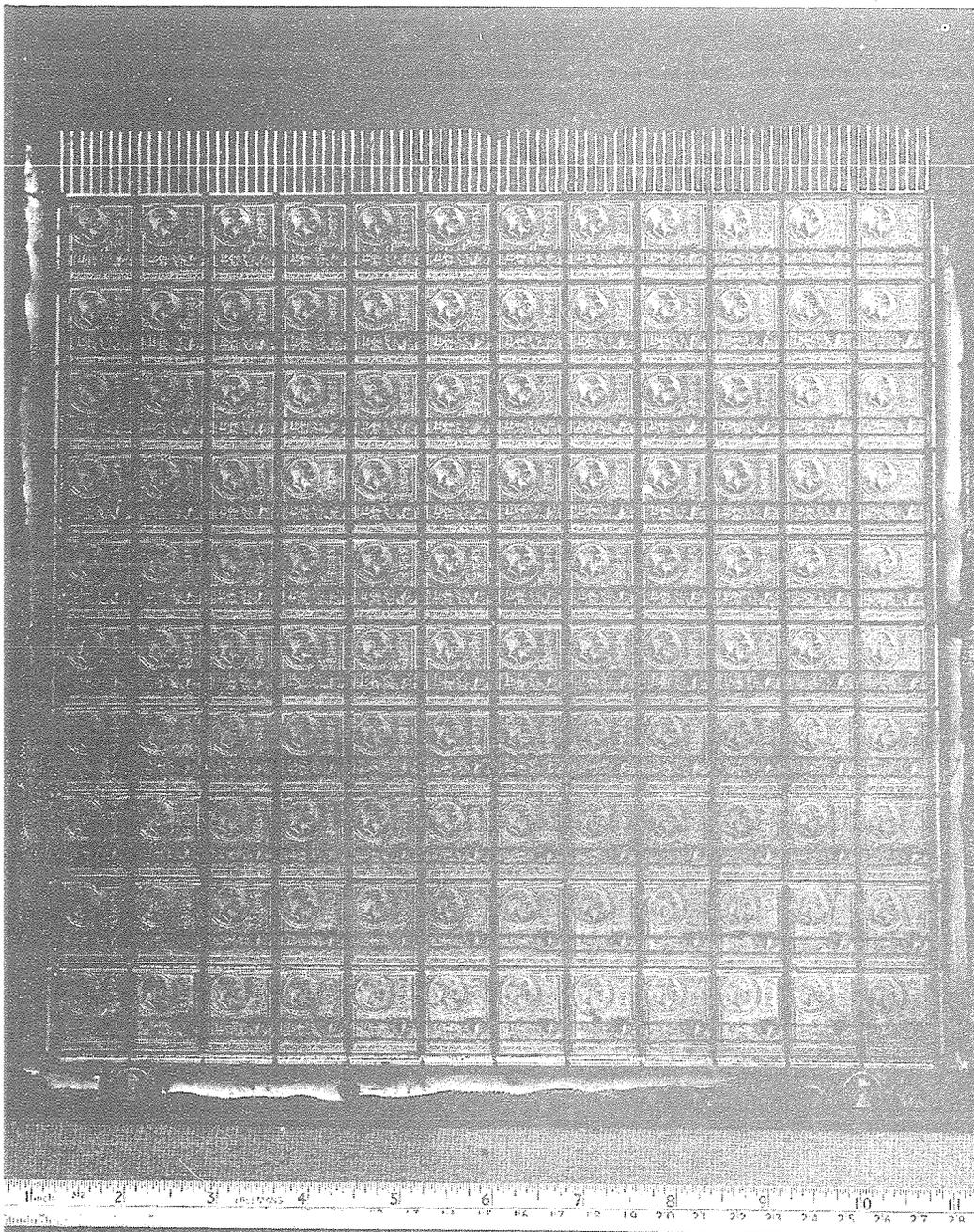
1/2d (Photo No. 55) – There is an unnumbered plate with large margins essentially identical to that described above for the 1/4d.

In addition, there are the separate top and bottom panes as described for the 1/4d. Interestingly, however, the bottom pane is mounted on a manufactured backing. This carries the trademark: “Whitfield’s Ironwood Printing Board” (Photo No. 56).

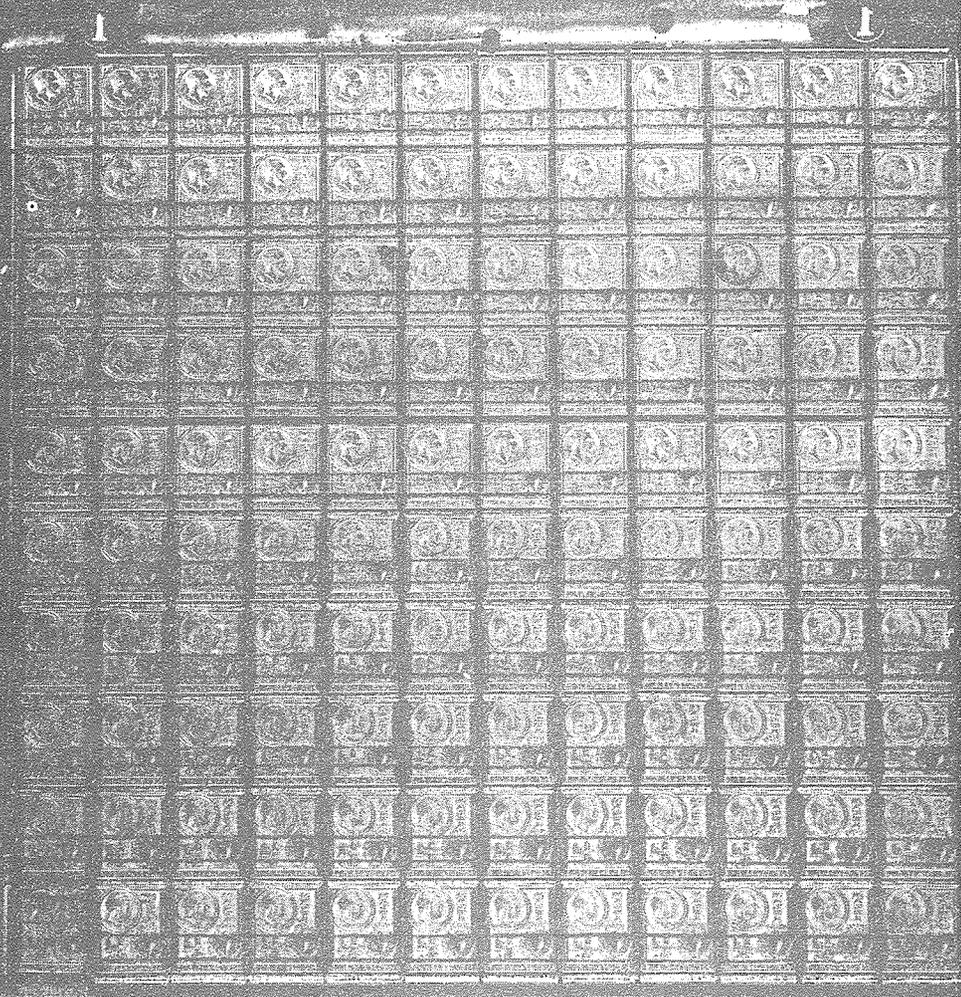
## Looking Behind the Plates

The bottom pane plate attached to this board has broken off into three pieces. Glued to the back of the metal pieces is a pane printed from this plate on a thin paper. The colour of the printing is in the green of the issue stamp. There are remnants of the same green colour ink on the plate (Photo No. 57).

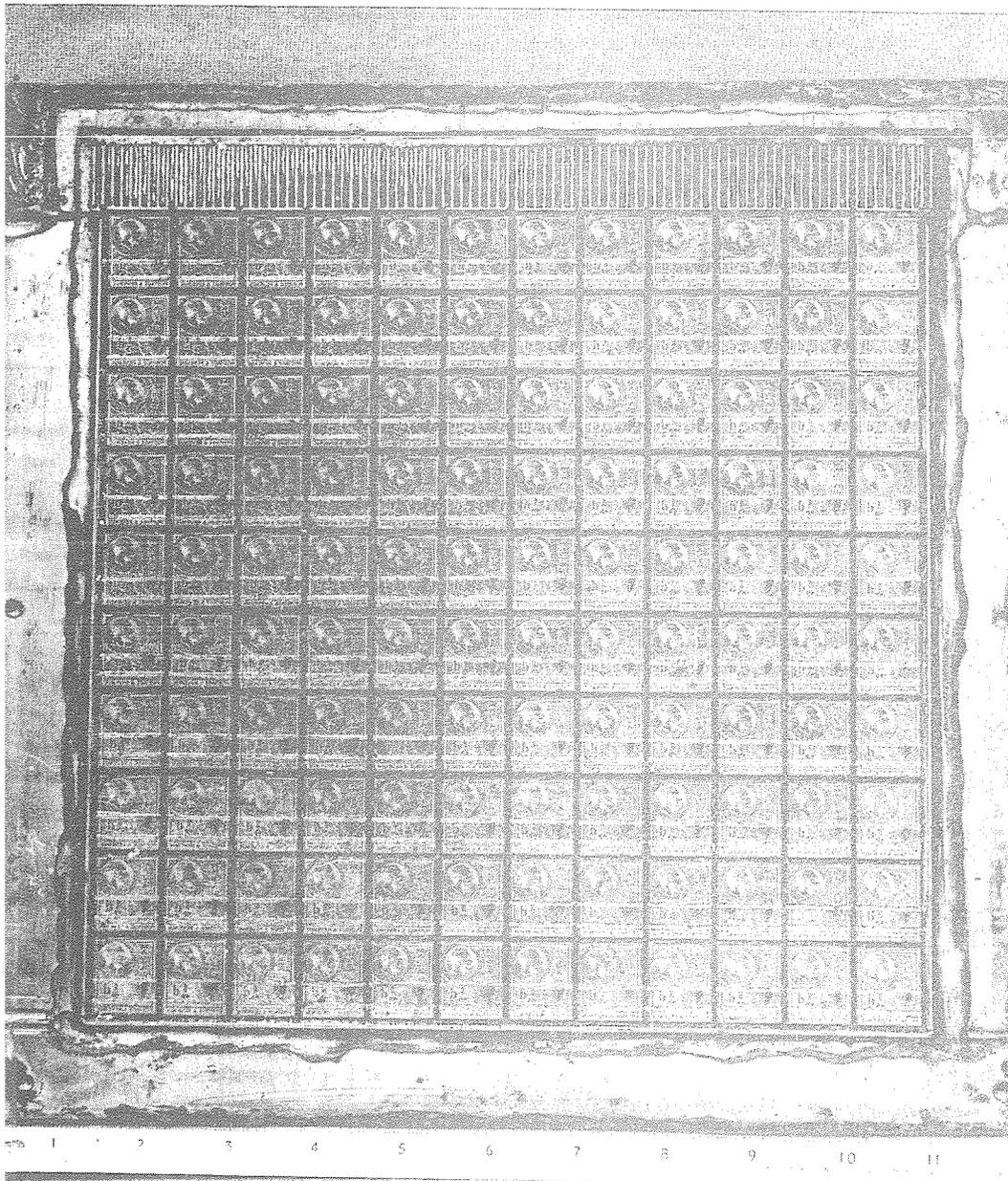
The 1930 1/2d George V Postage and Revenue Plate which was attached to a prefabricated printing board was broken in three places. The attachment was effected by tacks driven into the backing through holes in the plate. When the segments were lifted from the board a neatly printed pane of the 1/2d value in the issued yellow/green colour was found attached to the back of the plate. This printing was on paper which was aged and broken due to brittleness. Most of it



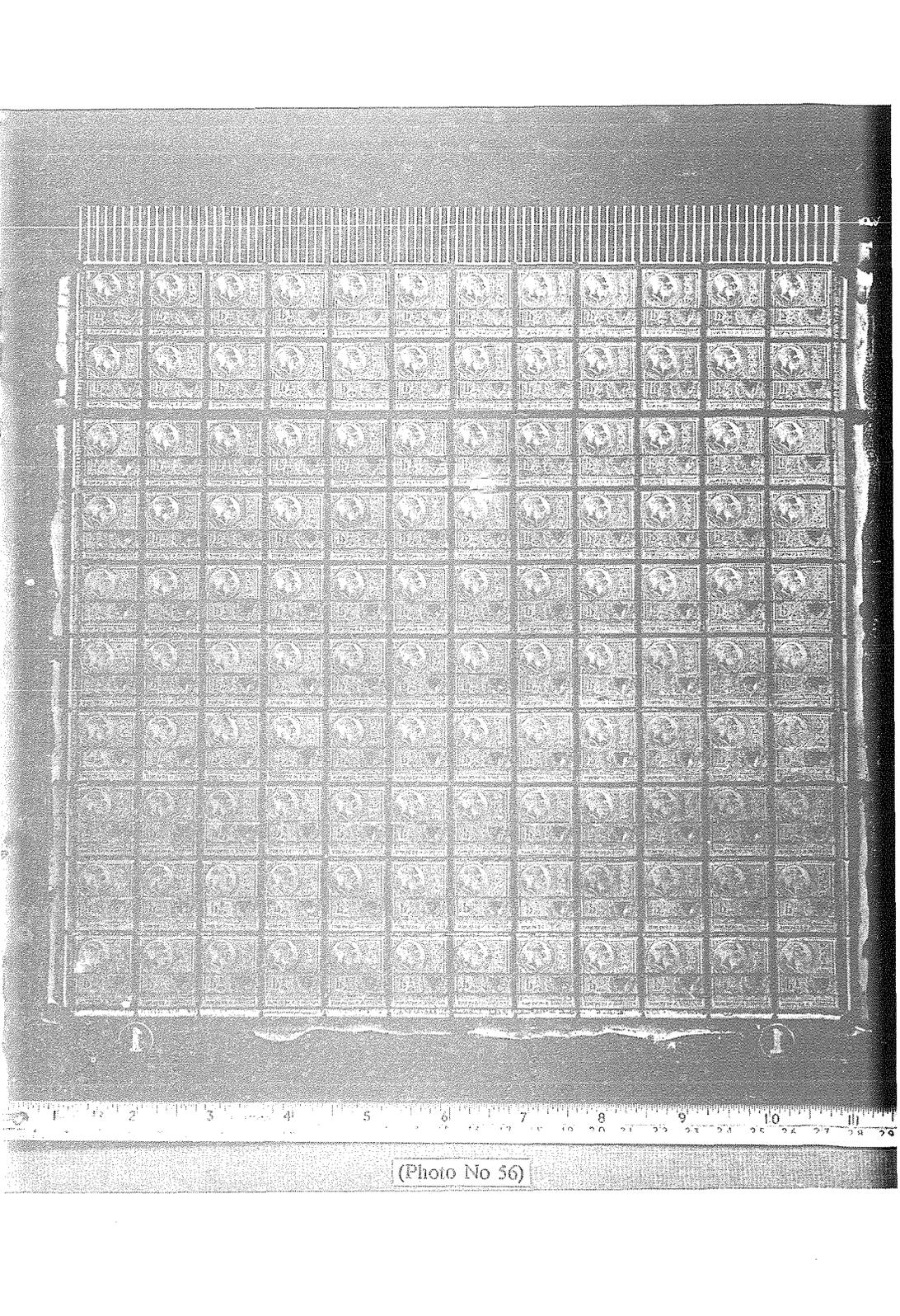
(Photo No 53)



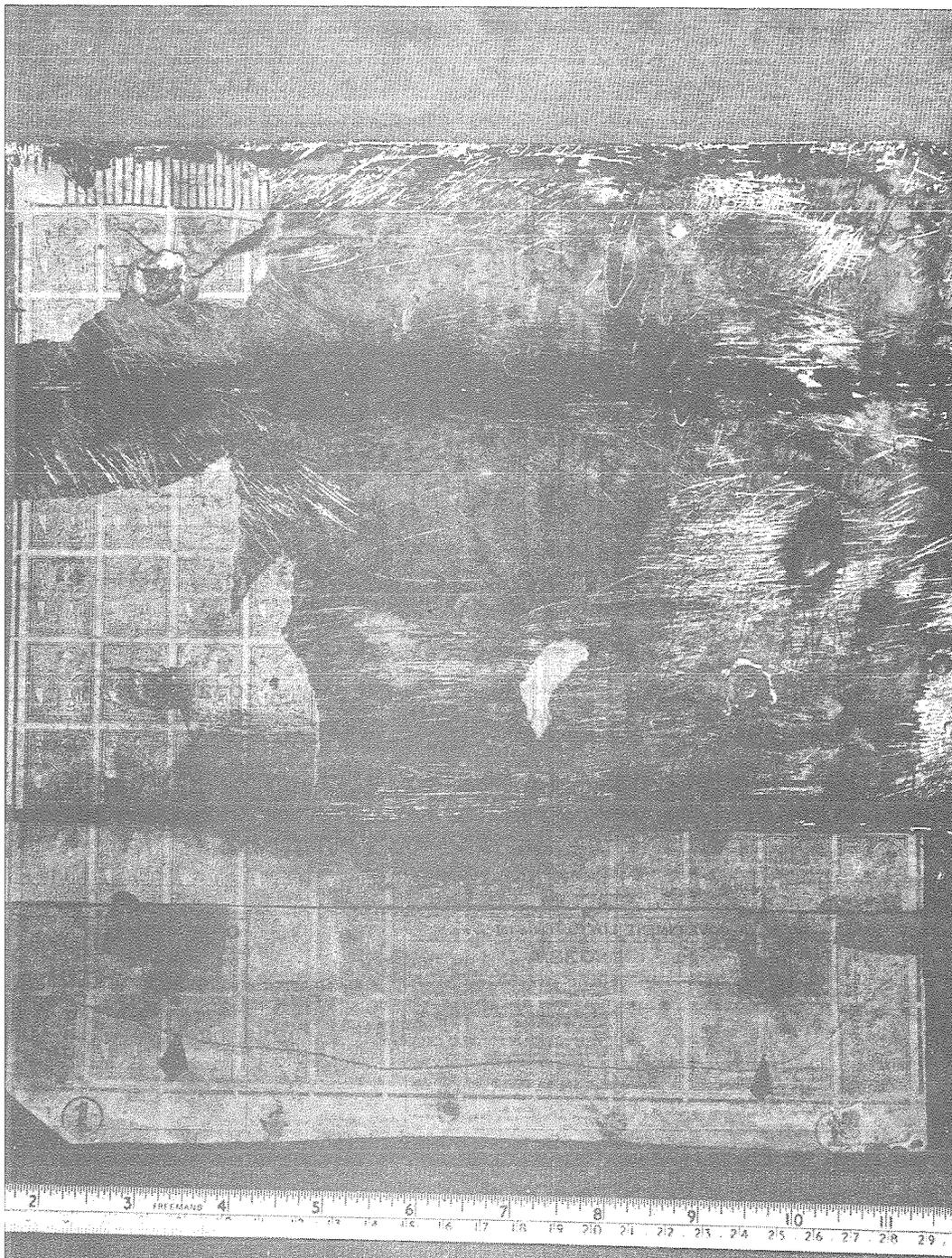
(Photo No 54)



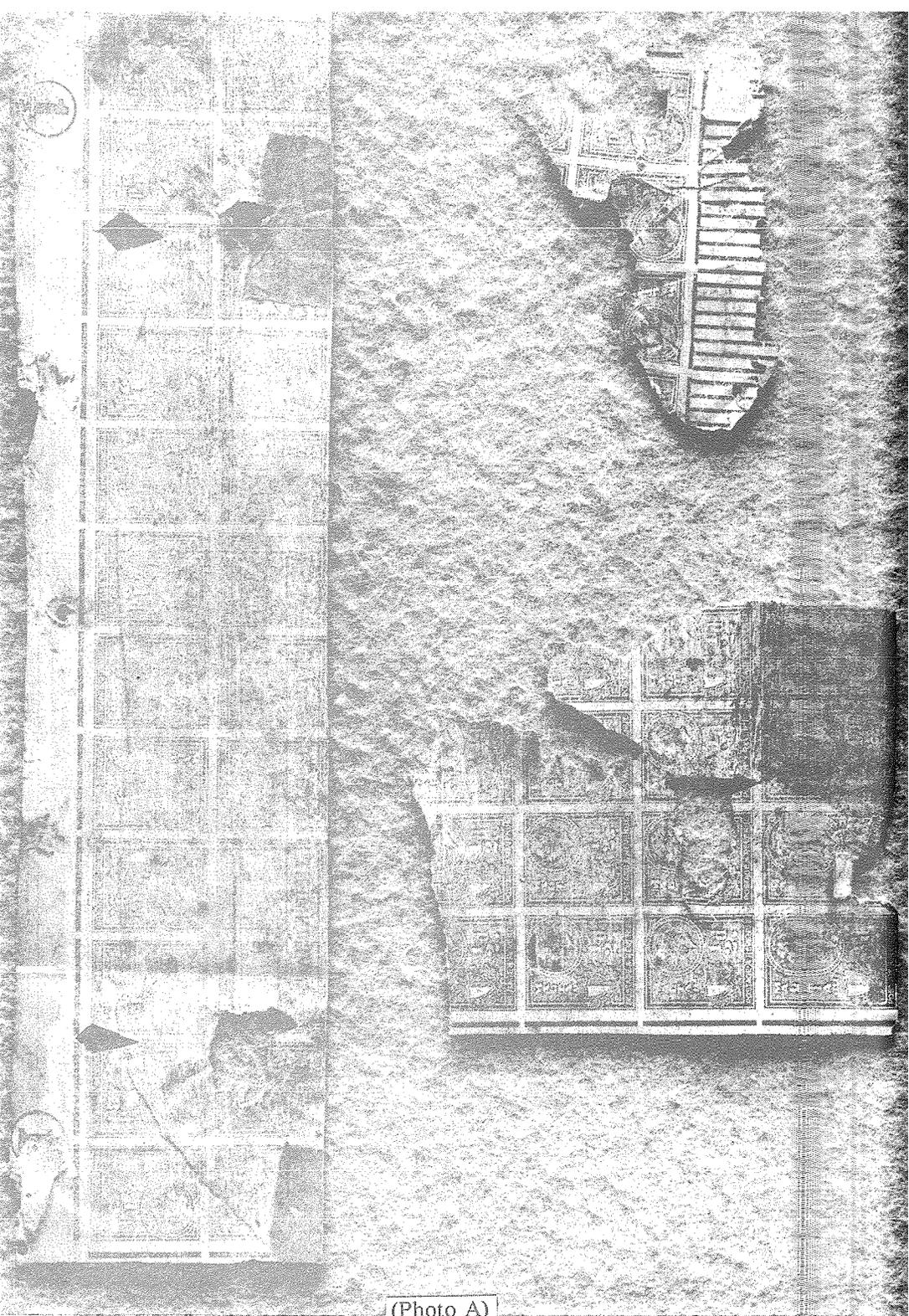
(Photo No 55)



(Photo No 56)



(Photo No 57)



(Photo A)

(Photo B)

**035/A**

Office No. [redacted]

Valid for the draw of [redacted]

*SIXPENCE STAKE - Logħiba ta' sitt soldi.*

Office No. [redacted]  
Nru. ta' [redacted]

A stake [redacted]  
Valid for [redacted]

**032/A**

Office No. [redacted]

Valid for the draw of [redacted]

*SIXPENCE STAKE - Logħiba ta' sitt soldi.*

Office No. [redacted]  
Nru. ta' [redacted]

A stake [redacted]  
Valid for [redacted]

Valid for the draw of [redacted]

Receiver's initials [redacted]

The right of claiming [redacted]

*SIXPENCE STAKE - Logħiba ta' sitt soldi.*

Valid for the draw of [redacted]

Receiver's initials [redacted]

**MALTA GOVERNMENT LOTTO - Lottu tal-Gvern.**

**033/A**

Office No. [redacted]

Valid for the draw of [redacted]

*SIXPENCE STAKE - Logħiba ta' sitt soldi.*

Prizes : On the First number drawn, 64 times  
—on Two numbers drawn, 250 times—on  
Three numbers drawn, 2,000 times—and  
on Four numbers drawn, 5,000 times the  
amount of the stake.

Premijiet:—Fuq Prim Estratt, 64 darba—  
fuq Amba, 250 darba—fuq Tern, 2,000 darba—fuq  
Kwatern, 5,000 darba is-somma li tilgħab.

Fil-każ ta' Prim Estratt, il-probabbiltà tar-robb hi  
ta' wieħed f'kull 90—fil-każ ta' Amba, ta' wieħed  
f'kull 400—fil-każ ta' Tern, ta' wieħed f'kull 1,730  
—u fil-każ ta' Kwatern, ta' wieħed f'kull 6,930.

Id-dritt għar-robb jintilef jekk il-bilgħab għall-  
Premijiet ta' 30 jumant minn dak id-darba li  
fuq b'haq innaqari.

Receiver's signature [redacted]  
Firma tar-Rispettabli [redacted]

The right of claiming wins is barred by  
the lapse of 30 days from the date of the  
draw.

**033/A**

Office No. [redacted]

Valid for the draw of [redacted]

*SIXPENCE STAKE - Logħiba ta' sitt soldi.*

Receiver's initials [redacted]

Office No. [redacted]  
Nru. ta' [redacted]

A stake [redacted]  
Valid for [redacted]

Receiver's signature [redacted]  
Firma tar-Rispettabli [redacted]

The right of claiming [redacted]

adhered to the back of the plate, but a bit adhered to the printing board. (Photo A)

This paper contained on its reverse a form for Malta Lotto tickets printed in English and Maltese. (Photo B)

Several data suggest that the paper was deliberately printed rather than an offset from ink that was left wet. First, it was on the back of a printing plate which has been attached to a backboard. Therefore, it could not have casually received an impression during stacking of the printing plates. An impression could have been received only had the plate been removed from the backing board and wet ink on the plate contacted the paper. It is improbable that an inadvertently printed piece of paper would have then been fastened between plate and backing board before the plate was nailed down.

Secondly, several razor cut diamond-shaped openings appear in the paper. These are of the type normally made by a printer after a trial image has been pulled in order to place the trial sheet atop another image and check the registration in different areas. It is improbable that a casually placed interleaving sheet of scrap from paper would contain these neatly cut holes. (Photo C)

Finally, the image is, although faint from aging, even and quite strong in the border portions. This type of image requires extreme pressure even with fresh ink. If this were ink that had stayed on the plate since it was inked in London, with the Malta form placed on it after the plates were shipped to Malta, it is highly improbable that this type of image could have been printed. (Photo D)

The more than one hundred plates found in the storage attic were scrupulously cleaned of ink with three notable exceptions. These were plates for the 1930 1/2d value described above, which along with 1 - 1/2d and 6d plates of the same issue, were heavily coated with ink in the respective issued colours.

The placement of a sheet between plate and backing board is a normal shimming operation to slightly raise the level of the type in the printing forme. The Malta Lotto form which appears to have been used during printer's makeready would not be expected to be at hand in the security printer's shop in London. It would have been more economically printed at the Government Printing Office in Valletta. However, since the plates were defaced before leaving London, and the image on the lotto forms is predefacement, clearly this printing occurred in London.

A probable explanation is that waste from each colony's security printing was kept segregated for purpose of accountability. For whatever reason the lotto tickets had been printed in London, the excess Malta lotto sheets were used for the makeready during a printing of the 1/2d 1930 issue.

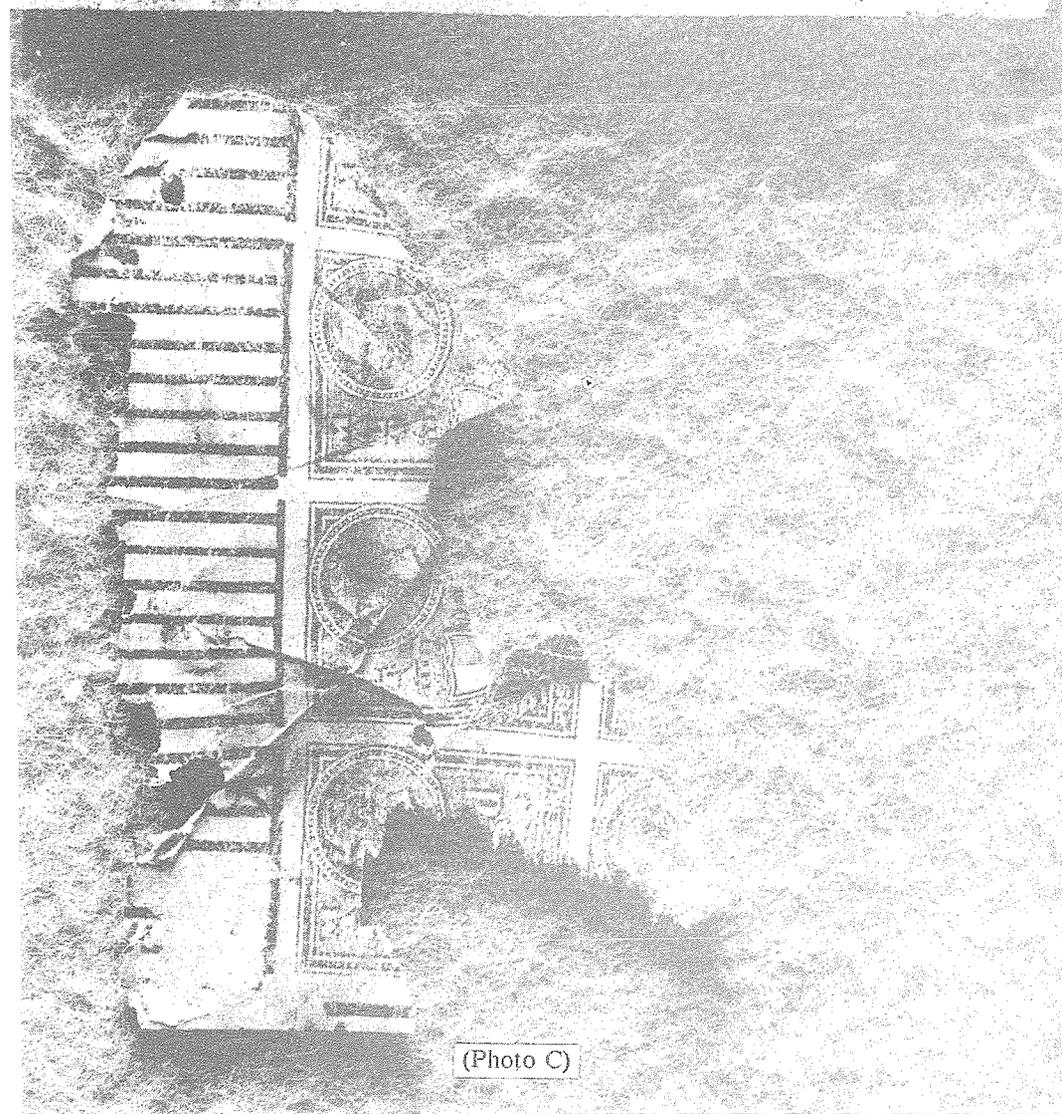
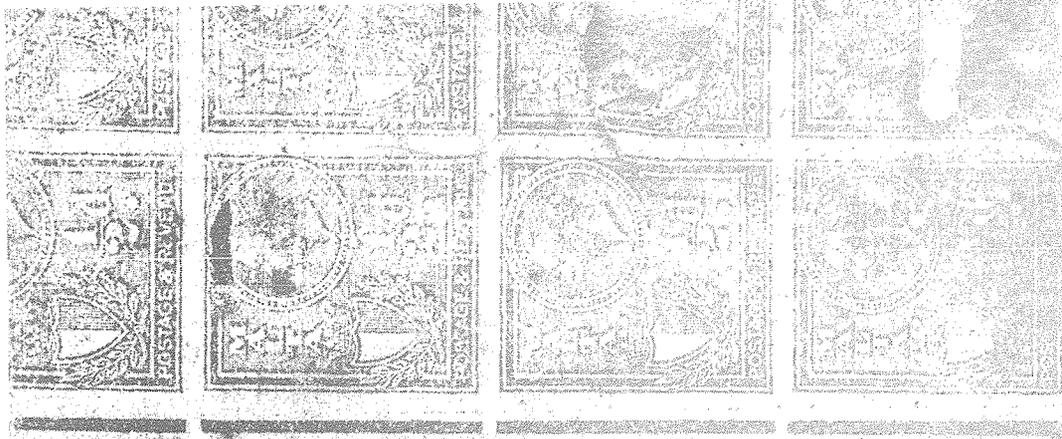
(Photo No. 58) - The top pane printing plate is also similar to that of the 1/4d. It also contains remnants of yellow/green ink; and, also on the back are remnants of the neatly-printed pane of stamps in the yellow/green ink.

1d (Photo No. 59) - The unnumbered single pane is as the 1/4d.

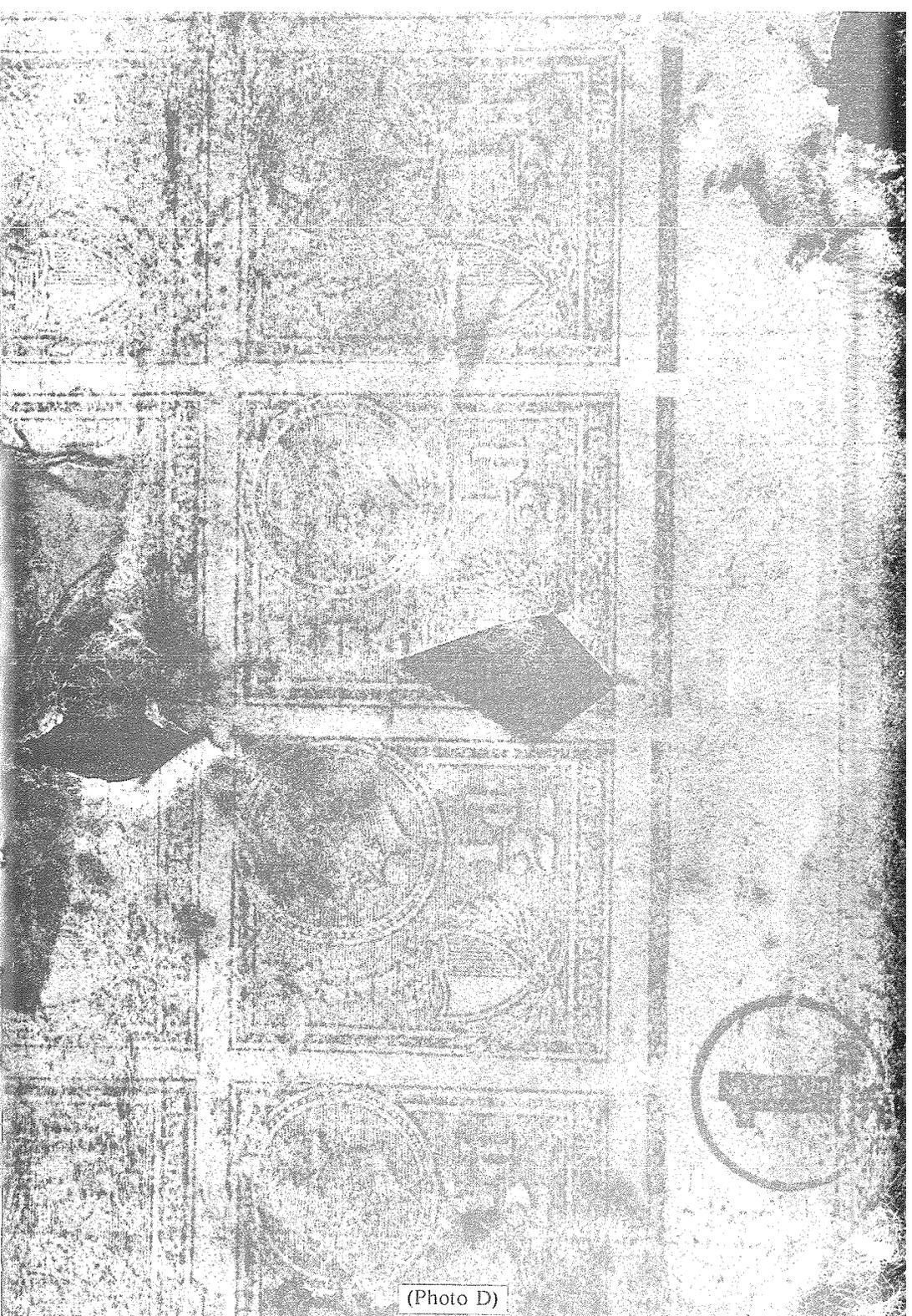
(Photo No. 60) - The bottom pane is as described. Individual stamp printing cliches have been replaced in row 4, No. 6, and row 9, No. 12.

(Photo No. 61) - The upper pane is as described for the 1/4d. Stamps were replaced at row 2, No. 2.

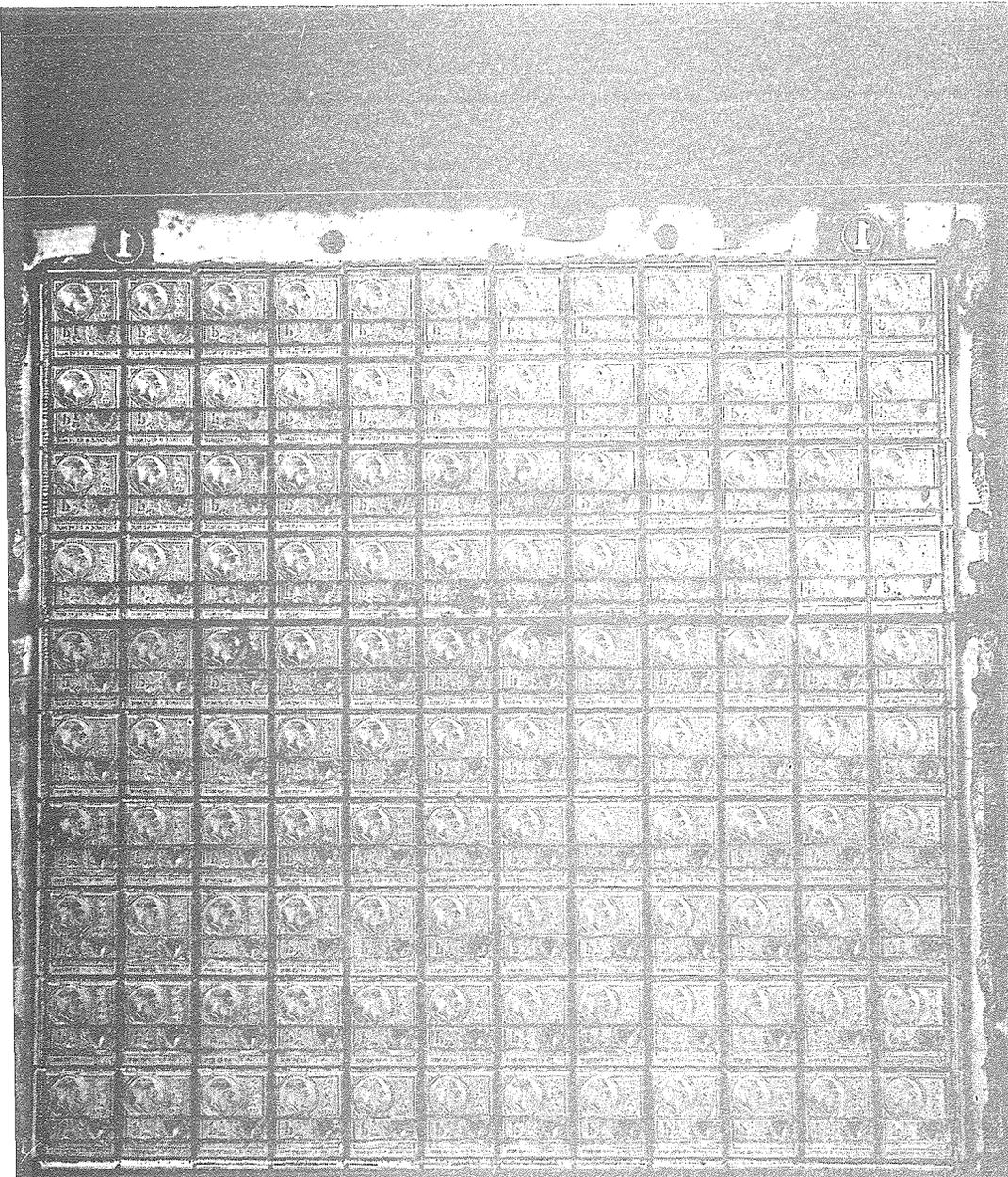
*to be continued*



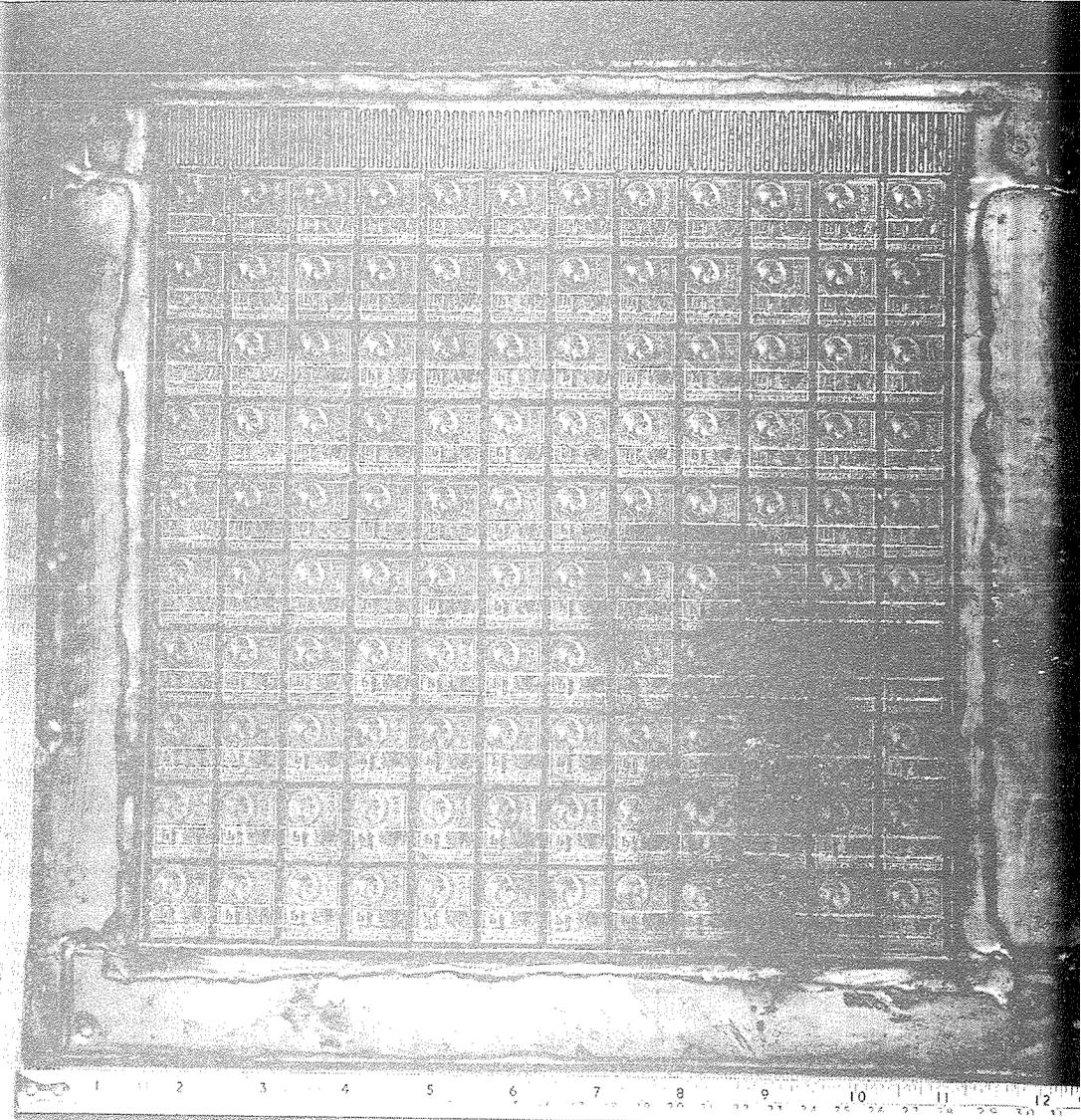
(Photo C)



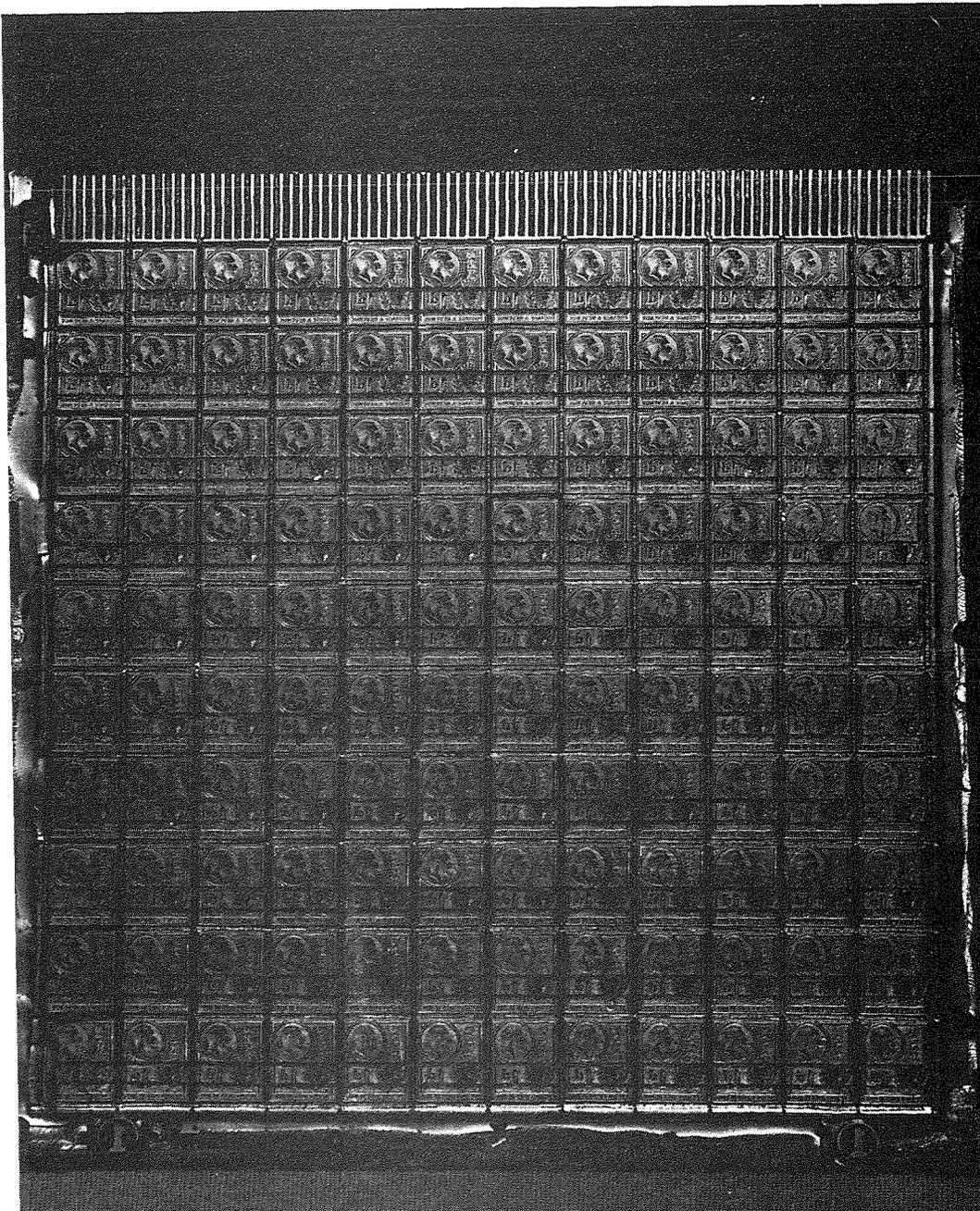
(Photo D)



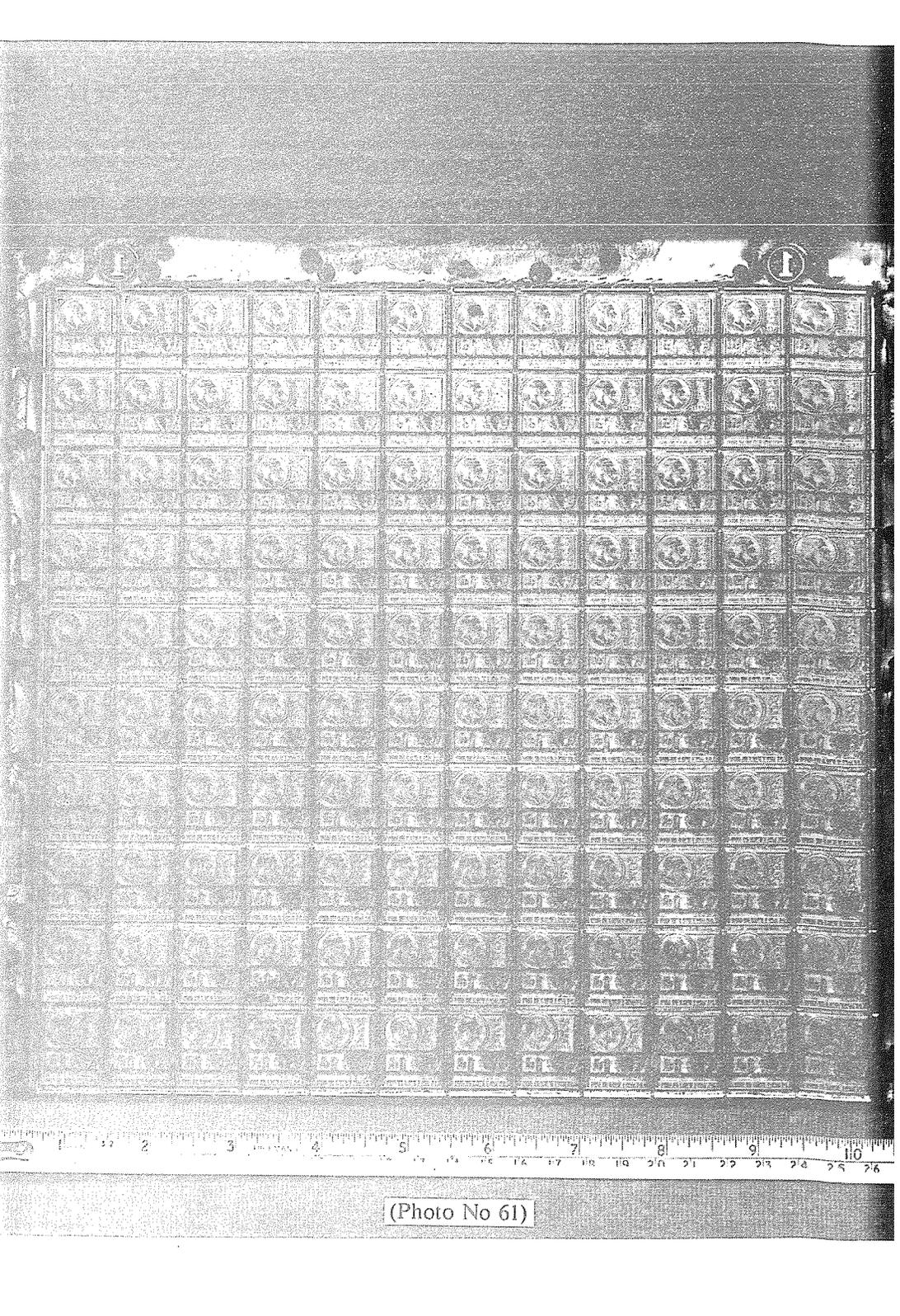
(Photo No 58)



(Photo No 59)



(Photo No 60)



(Photo No 61)