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Editor: MIKE JACKSON

3 Cottesmore Avenue, Melton Mowbray, Leics LE13 0HY
Tel: +44 (0)1664 859199 Fax: +44 (0)1664 859189 E-mail: mike@mjpublications.com

Assistant Editor: ANDREW CLARIDGE

PO Box 1999, Witham, Essex CM8 1RZ

Advertising Manager: PETER TANNER

High Standings, 13 Huberts Close, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7EN

Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1753 887755

Web site: www.gbeps.org.uk/journal.htm

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More on Britain's Rarest Postage Stamp

As stated in my article in GBJ, Vol. 38, p. 42, a mint copy of Britain's rarest postage stamp — the KEVII 1904 6d overprinted 'I.R. OFFICIAL' (*Fig. 1*) — was sold at auction on 19 May 2000 by Stanley Gibbons. According to SG's press release it was sold to an overseas telephone bidder for £92,000.

Since that article was published, Karl Louis has sent details of another mint 6d I.R. Official (*Fig. 2*) from a Mohrmann auction catalogue of 1964. The item was Lot 1389 and the description stated that it had a certificate from the Royal Philatelic Society, London. The stamp is centred to the right, whereas the one illustrated in *Fig. 1* and all of the three mint and one used examples in the Royal Philatelic Collection are centred to the left.



Fig. 1

So, if this stamp is genuine and has not been acquired by an institutional collection, there is a second copy in private hands, (although strictly speaking The Queen's stamps are also in private hands as the Royal Philatelic Collection is a private collection and not part of the Royal Collection of art and artefacts which are held in effect in trust for the nation).



Fig. 2

MJ

Possible Re-Use of Line-Engraved Plates

Dr David Leivers FRPSL writes:

I was particularly interested in Winston Hollins' article on Plate 129 Die 2 (GBJ, Vol. 38, No. 6, p. 108) and his reference to my article on the possible re-use of line-engraved plates. I believe the critical tests for a possibly re-used plate would be a progressive loss or gain of extraneous marks with ageing of the plate, some pattern of marks that would suggest the form of previous impressions (similar appearance to a fresh/re-entry) and probably localisation of the effect to areas of the plate rather than just specific units. In Plate 129, Winston's findings can be construed as meeting these standards. AA may be a true fresh entry in addition. The variable burr marks also seem to be similar to 2d Plate 9 though he does not report the vertical and horizontal scratches that are a feature on Plate 9. I do not have any quantity of Plate 129 copies but there are presumably plenty available for further study. It will be interesting if his research is able to enlighten us on the aspect of re-use of plates.

Winston Hollins replies:

I've found it particularly difficult to locate 1d Plate 129 stamps with a crisp look to the printing, and this has hindered progress. I was hoping that as soon as I'd published the article more stamps would flood in, but it hasn't happened. With regard to David's point about scratches on Plate 9, other 2d plates show scratches which grow stronger with age. Plate 8 is a good example; in this case the majority are vertical and appear on the area of the design rather than in the margins or corner squares. I've always assumed that these scratches are something to do with the levelling of the plate. My father was a tool maker, I remember him meticulously hand-levelling a steel plate with a scraper. This was worked in a circular way, constantly moving and changing direction. This is what I have assumed to be the root cause of the coloured curved marks on 2d Plate 3 in its later stages, but it doesn't cause scratching, it is more like a plane. I have no knowledge about how the steel plates for printing were flattened but I should imagine it was some sort of grinding process followed by hand scraping. I think the scratches represent the scratches left by the grinding process, and in the case of 2d Plate 9 the hand scraping performed was inadequately performed leaving shallow scratches on the plate. When a plate was withdrawn from use it was 'partially defaced': this was done on the day the plate was last removed from the printing press. I've read somewhere that this was achieved by scoring with a file or some such instrument. Batches of the partially defaced plates were later completely defaced mechanically. Both these processes seem likely to create deep scratches. ✉

Machin Postal History

Michael H. Lockton FRPSL

Machin stamps have now been with us almost 35 years, and although several articles have appeared in *The GB Journal* regarding these stamps, I don't think a single word has been written on Machin postal history. This has been a very neglected field of study as Machin stamp collectors are apt to consider these stamps are issued by the Post Office for their sole study without acknowledging that each value and colour has been issued for a specific duty. As a Postal Historian, it is their commercial use that excites interest and the recent publication of *British Postal Rates 1937 to 2000 — Dulac, Wilding and Machin Issues* by Robert Johnson and Gordon Peet must surely invite other members of the GBPS to widen their horizons to collect the postal history aspects of Machin stamps.

Let me start by stating that the collecting of Machin postal history is not an easy option — there are several fields of study but whichever field one chooses, it is not easy to obtain material (QV Penny Red covers are far more plentiful than Machin postal history). The majority of GB postal history dealers are unable to offer any modern commercial used covers as most do not go beyond 1950, and the only source of such material is in a few dealers' junk boxes. The material is inexpensive but there is a serious dearth of unusual covers. Now having given a warning of the difficulties involved, let me expand on the excitement and interest available to those who are prepared to accept the challenge. Some may say it is too late to pick up this particular field and it may be many years yet before such material reaches the auction rooms.

Pre-decimal issue

Firstly there is the Pre-decimal Period, short-lived but well worth the study, although it is now not easy to find (see Fig. 1). The various rates involved for inland mail, overseas mail and special services are very well documented in Johnson and Peet's book. Already the few colourful and exotic covers that have been on the market, have made surprisingly high prices.



Fig. 1 — London to Chicago, USA, February 1969.
Zone B ½ oz Airmail plus Express fee — total 3s 6d.
Adhesives cancelled in red by 'LONDON POSTAL CUSTOMS' handstamp.

Decimal issue

The major field of study starts with decimalisation on 15 February 1971 with 12 small-format stamps, although the large-format 10p, 20p, 50p and £1 predate the general definitive issue. These latter stamps used on cover or piece prior to decimalisation would make an interesting forerunner to any Machin collection. Since 1971, over 140 different colours and values have been issued. As postal historians, we are not interested in gum, and even phosphor bands are outside the confines of this article as they come within the remit of postal mechanisation. With every change of rate, the Post Office produces a new range of Machin stamps to cover certain specific services and it is for this reason that we find such a profusion of values. Over the past few years, rates have become more stable, but at the height of inflation in 1975, there were three different sets of rates.

Now let us consider how to collect Machin postal history, and what to collect

How. This may seem an obvious point — ‘on Cover’! But it is not quite that simple. Firstly, and I consider, most importantly, the stamp(s) need to be cancelled neatly by a postmark on which the date is clearly visible. We are talking about commercially used items which have a machine cancellation on which one can read the time, date and place of posting. The envelope should ideally be white in colour so as not to detract from the stamp,



Fig. 2 — Orpington to London, 30 September 1986.
Inland Parcel Post, national rate, £1.50 up to 1 kg.

although it is always an added bonus if a cover illustrating an overseas airmail rate is on a pre-printed airmail envelope with striped coloured edging (normally red white and blue). As soon as one starts collecting the rates on heavier letters, one is faced with very large buff envelopes that will need to be cut down to manageable size. For parcel post rates, one will certainly end up with a piece. In this case, I consider, the piece should include the full address of the recipient (*see Fig. 2*). The other source of material is on Post Office forms for a wide variety of usages, but again the postmark with readable date is all-important.

What. One has to decide what to collect — the field is so vast that one must set boundaries — otherwise space becomes an all-important factor. In *Postal usage of the decimal Machin series 1971–1996* by Martin P. Nicholson, he lists over 1600 different rates in Volume 1 purely for ‘Inland’ duties, and a further 700 in Volume 2 for ‘European destinations’, and that is only the tip of the iceberg.

Let us consider the areas of study available

1. Inland Letter rates, 1st & 2nd.
Class plus the make up rates from 2nd to 1st class.
2. European Letter rates.
3. Overseas rates to Zones A, B and C — latterly Zones 1 and 2.
4. Aerograms/Airletters.
5. Regional issues.
6. Parcel post — inland and overseas.
7. HM Forces mail including that from various fields of conflict.
8. Registered mail.
9. Express/Special Delivery.
10. Recorded Delivery.
11. Post Office Forms — certificates of posting, compensation letter fee, telegram forms etc.

A collection of any one of the above areas, or a combination of several can make an interesting study. In Johnson and Peet’s book, Section 8.2

lists the Machin decimal stamps from ½p to £10 in value order, giving the date of issue and withdrawal with the rates applicable between those dates for which the stamp could be used. It is this particular aspect of Machin postal history that I collect and typical examples are shown in Figs 3 and 4. Some of these rates were very short-lived; one of which being



Fig. 3 — Clacton-on-Sea to Cyprus, April 1971.
Airmail letter, Zone A up to 1 oz, 10p.



Fig. 4 — Orpington to Tokyo, August 1990.
Airmail letter, Zone C up to 10g, 37p.

Fig. 6 — Lewes to Denmark, 5 June 1980. European Registered Express letter up to 50g, total fee £2.

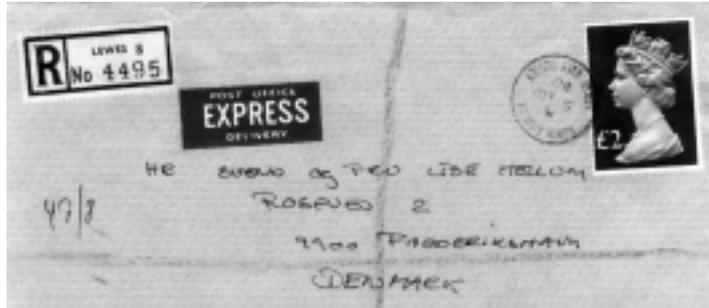


Fig. 5 — London to Reigate, 7 March 1980. Inland 1st Class Registered mail up to 60g.

that for the 75p black used on registered mail applicable for four days only. An example of this rate is shown in Fig. 5 albeit used a few days after the rate change — a not unusual occurrence as counter clerks must have problems in keeping up-to-date with changes. This particular aspect of collecting Machins requires an envelope to carry a single stamp illustrating the rate applicable on the day posted. Even this however can result in some very obscure rates which are not listed in any study of Machin postal history — see Fig. 6 as a typical example. This item is a registered envelope sent express mail to Europe, weighing up to 50g, posted on 5 June 1980. The registration fee at that time was £1.00, the express fee was 75p and the rate for a letter to Europe weighing up to 50g was 25p, making a total of exactly £2 as indicated by the £2 Light Emerald & purple brown Machin stamp.

When collecting registered mail, express mail or recorded delivery mail, the fee may not be equivalent to that of an existing stamp and therefore some very exotic combinations of Machin stamps may be obtained. The cover illustrated in Fig. 7 is a typical example, being an express, recorded delivery, first class mail item using a pre-printed (Clerk to the

Justices, Rotherham), second class pre-paid envelope. Six different Machin stamps are used to collect a total of £1.42½ to cover the rates applicable on 25 January 1982.

And finally, Machin stamps can be found on Post Office forms such as Certificates of Posting (now no longer chargeable), Compensation Letter Fees, Advice of Receipt and Telegraph Forms. The last item is normally retained by the Post Office, but some forms used within FPOs have found their way onto the market and a very colourful example is shown in Fig. 8.

Conclusion

I must be the only member of the GBPS to have exhibited Machin postal history at Stampex (September 1990), but following the recent acceptance of Machin stamps at International level in the Traditional Class, I would hope that others might follow my example. However, although every cover exhibited may be rarer than a penny black on cover, don't expect a high award. Until we have competitions confined to 'modern' issues and postal history, it is unlikely that judges will recognise the scarcity of this material. I hope this short article will induce others to take up the torch for Machin postal history.



Fig. 7 — Wood Green to Rotherham, 25 January 1982.
Inland 1st Class Recorded and Special Delivery letter, total fee £1.54
(although adhesives to the value of only £1.42½).



Fig. 8 — Post Office International Telegram form.
18-word telegram to Delhi, India, total charge £3.86½.

Measurement of Shades — 1

John Cranmer

I have been following the articles in the last few GBJs about the scientific determination of the shade of stamps with some interest and no little puzzlement. I know that these days technology is paramount but just because we can do something it is not always beneficial to actually do it. I have worked in colour chemistry for virtually all my scientific career. Soon after starting I came to realise that to a trained eye it is virtually impossible to say that two colours are exactly the same. Occasionally two colours that appear identical under one set of lighting conditions will be very different under another. This is where the standardised instrumental measurement of shade can seem so appealing but I am not convinced of the usefulness of this technique except in some specific situations.

It is known that stamps can vary in shade across a sheet and that the colours can change with time. When a shade can be clearly associated with a specific printing or change of ink I agree that it is of considerable philatelic importance and well worth study. However, except in these circumstances, I would ask: why bother about shades except from a visual point of view? What is the philatelic significance of shades produced during what was intended to be a uniform printing run except to demonstrate that there is variability in the process. As far as I can see it only shows that the printer made a slight error in mixing the ink or the pigments had not been standardised accurately. With millions of stamps being printed a considerable variation would be expected in practice and this is presumably what we are seeing today. The extremes of the shades for any stamp can make a very impressive visual display but when a machine is required to distinguish shades I would ask, so what?

After measurement there may be some stamps that fall into clearly defined areas in a colour space and these may be associated with a specific printing. I accept that these are important. However I suspect that the majority would fall onto a continuous region with no clearly defined areas to separate the shades. Where does that leave us? Confused and arguing about where to draw the boundaries that define an expensive shade from a cheap one and who should make the decisions? With a three dimensional colour space (red, green, blue) you only need four different regions for each colour to define sixty-four shades, five regions gives over one hundred shades. Surely no one wants that.

Philatelists have been collecting shades for many years based on differences that can be seen with the eye. That is their right and, although I am not interested in shades myself, I would defend that right vigorously. To go down the road to instrumental determination of shades as distinct from printings seems to me to be a negative step. I would hate to see each stamp in a dealer's list defined by a list of RGB values.

Measurement of Shades — 2

Vic Currie

If nothing else my article on measuring shades (GBJ, Vol. 38, No. 6, p. 105) has put the subject on the agenda, and in the process we have learnt something of what the 'Royal' has already done about trying to make a more objective assessment for measuring shades.

As the Editor pointed out in his footnote to my article the machine used for the measurements was a Minolta spectrophotometer, which measures the component colours comprising the colour we actually see.

I understand that the comparisons with thick and thin layering referred to by Chris Harman in his article (GBJ, Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 12) are slightly misleading. After all natural light is being reflected from the stamp, and this is what enters the eye. How the reflected light comes about does not really matter so long as we can characterise the reflected light in a reproducible way. In this regard it acts as a 'fingerprint'. As to the example of the three stamps from the same sheet, Chris does not say whether they all looked the same! After all we know that you can get variations of shades across a sheet. I think what really matters when attempting to use an instrument is whether it can do what the eye does when it receives reflected light, regardless of the cause or origination of the colour.

Nick Peacock in his contribution quite rightly pointed out the importance of primary standards if machines are to be used. He also raises, amongst other helpful suggestions, the question of toned paper and its effect on perceived colour. But does that really matter, since present judgements are subjective and dependent on what the eye sees? We would all I am sure agree that the human eye is not infallible, and is itself subject to limitations, being sensitive to some colours more than others. Some people are colour blind to a greater or lesser extent, and how without the use of an objective scientific measurement can we be sure of a consistent answer? If any collector of shades has any doubts about the subjectivity of this matter as it stands at the present time, they should read the article by J. B. Slingby in the May 1972 issue of the GBJ, brought to our attention by Nick in his article (GBJ, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 39).

My intention in having the measurements made on the Block Cypher 1½d shades was to try and advance the discussion onto a more scientific means of measurement. What I feel now needs to be done is that the 'Royal' instigates some more tests, in conjunction with experts in the field of colour measurement. I am well aware that there are many problems, not least those that would arise if it was found, as I believe it would be, that a satisfactory scientific method for measuring 'shades' were found. I do not think it can be left where it stands at the moment.

Measurement of Shades — 3

W. A. Wiseman

Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

Shades are subjective so there is no chance that any instrument or set of rules will help collectors recognise shades objectively. Many factors have an effect on perceived shades e.g. design, inks, incident and reflected lights and their spectra, background, depth of ink, paper colour, surface and their history from creation. Examining spectra either broadly, as with Vic Currie's Minolta (GBJ, Vol. 38, No. 6, p. 105) or finely, using more sophisticated instruments, e.g. a spectroscope, is no help.

Shade 'buffs' regard used stamps as barely worthy of notice, yet the ordinary collector looking at his collection wants to know where they fit into the scheme of things and hence their value. Most cannot afford mint stamps which have their own drawbacks especially if, like the 1924 KGV 1d, they were created in large numbers and rarely bear any indication of when they were printed or issued.

Used stamps for study must be lightly cancelled and have legible dates. Those dates will give the period of general usage of a shade and may indicate whether it was the result of a deliberate decision or action or simply a random variation of colour caused by e.g. changes of temperature in the print room, a new plate or printer, a paper change, variations in make-ready, depth of printing, and especially history.

KEVII stamps

The thickness of the surfacing on chalky paper stamps was thin at first. Later, it increased and changed in nature. Thickness can be measured and is therefore objective. Such measurements could be a new and sounder basis for catalogue entries but they would require more work before they appeared in print.

Age causes irreversible changes in shades and paper. Some inks can be rubbed off chalky paper or other surfaced paper. Exposure to light (or lack of it), damp, etc. cause other changes, even in what appears to be well preserved material. Paper varies according to details of its manufacture but irreversibly and continuously degrades from the moment the tree is felled to make it.

The KEVII 1s Board of Education overprint, SG O87

Nine 120-set sheets only of the above were created on 19 December 1902. From those nine sheets, one was registered and another used for official purposes, e.g. handstamped

'SPECIMEN', 'CANCELLED'. Originally they were all the same colour and shade but a collector had two copies certified by Michael Astley as genuine, yet of different shades. He asked for a second opinion which fell to me to give. One copy, handstamped 'CANCELLED', exactly matched the shade of the block of six 'CANCELLED' stamps, so-called colour standards (see *The De La Rue Years*, Vol. 1, pp. 99–104) in the NPM while the other, normal stamp, matched the shade of the registration sheet.

The registration sheet and the colour standards have different histories. The former had lain undisturbed in a folder from creation, while the latter spent years in the Inland Revenue (IR) and De La Rue (DLR) books of such standards in DLR's printing room. The NPM block of six and the single could only have come from the original block of 24 which was equally split between DLR and IR on 19 December 1902. In 1914, the DLR block of 12 was again split, into two blocks of six, one of which was passed to the Post Office and is the NPM block. The fate of the other 18 (six DLR and 12 IR) is uncertain at the time of writing but the copy in question is one of them.

The 1902 KEVII 2d

Detailed research also yields dividends, e.g. the KEVII 1902 2d, SG shades M11(1) and (3). The former is the colour of the registration sheet, so came from the 1st printing in 1902 and the latter came from the 1903 2nd, known by dates of used stamps and Departmental overprints. The first overprints created are *only* on shade (1), e.g. the OW Official, while those created after the second but before the third printing (1904) are found *only* on shade (3) e.g. both Admiralty Official overprints (SG O104,110); many forgeries have been seen but none has the correct tablet shade. The KEVII Govt. Parcels 2d (O75) was overprinted twice, in 1902 on shade (1) and in 1903 on shade (3). The Part 1 catalogue should list both shades on such good provenance; shade (3) is rarer.

The difference between shades (1) and (3) meant *absolutely nothing* to those creating KEVII stamps. Colour Standards were *not* intended to be used for *matching* the new stamps to previous work or set standards. They were to show the printers which stamps were to be printed e.g. the green and red 2d, but not (say) the green and red 1s.

The age of stamps

Age affects colours of stamps, especially those from inks from natural sources, e.g. cochineal as used for DLR's purple doubly fugitive inks. Age can deepen, weaken or change colours, enhancing some and diminishing others. Hence when collectors view their stamps they have no means of telling what they were like at the time of creation,

except by reading what those around at the time said about them. So when a new shade is reported, was it created that colour or has it aged to that shade? The former might mean something; the latter certainly means nothing.

Basic research *before* claiming new shades of QV, KEVII and KGV stamps is needed; without that, claims are meaningless. There might be a case for *reducing* the number of catalogued shades, especially in the KE VII field. The KGV shades are much more difficult because of the cut-off of German artificial dyestuff inks in the 1914–18 War, but apart from variations in natural dyes, the ink sources for KEVII were constant. Deliberate changes were recorded both in archives and in DLR ink recipe books.

KGV shades etc

The failure of the first KGV stamps caused the authorities to become obsessed with the quality of printing. The failure was caused as much by the use of unglazed paper as by bad design. The Harrison 1911 contract was modified in November 1912 to include extra charges for ‘calendering’, i.e. plate glazing, paper prior to printing. The wording of the 1912 documents implies that Harrisons were already calendering their paper by then.

KEVII specialists already recognise that late printings of the 6d and 9d (e.g. SG 308) were on such paper. I do not know whether the first KGV Medal Head issues can be found on unglazed paper but later official papers show a continuing concern about the issue, with talk of ‘super-calendering’ whatever that may mean. It is not easy to see plate glazing, but it is objective. However, the glaze is easily removed. Wetting relaxes the paper and returns it to an unglazed state. Calendering may affect shades.

A new approach

Collectors of KGV stamps may well find answers if they set up what are known as ‘co-operative trials’. In such trials participants should be sent a colour reference guide, e.g. Methuen Guide, some identified standard stamps and some test stamps. The last should come from large blocks of even colour so everyone gets the same stamps. Everyone should then identify the stamps as best they can and give a guide reference. This procedure may fail but until it is tried no one can be certain.

Those who want to specialise in (say) KGV shades might try another idea. After a conference of specialists, selected stamps of most of the less costly shades should be put together on a collaborative basis to represent listed or agreed shades, mint and used. When there is general agreement, album pages should be made up and sent to a few geographically convenient centres, e.g. Manchester, Edinburgh, York, Nottingham, where

club members can compare their stamps for a small fee. Local Philatelic clubs, if willing, should be asked to look after them. In that way, the need for certification will only occur with expensive shades, say £50 or higher.

Conclusion

Like sin, the problem of shades is always with us. A piecemeal or instrumental approach will never get close to helping ordinary collectors at reasonable cost. I hope something useful will emerge from this offering to the debate.

Scarcity of QV Surface Printed Stamps on Cover

Gilbert Wheat FRPSL

Theo Brauer's article in Vol. 38, No. 6 following Bob Galland's (with a little help from me) in Vol. 38, No. 5 suggests that there is some growth of interest in this subject. Not before time, say I, because the ignorance is monumental, auction catalogues regularly appearing with grotesque inaccuracies such as 'very rare on cover' for a stamp that is really quite common on cover, and mostly, I am sure, written not just to stimulate bidding! So it is pleasing that some thought is being given to this matter.

I have been collecting GB surface printed stamps on cover for over 20 years now. By 1989 I realised that two of them — the 4d Brown, Garter (SG 154), and the 1s Orange, Spray (SG 151) — were unrecognised by many people as being scarce if not rare on cover, probably because of the identical appearance of the corresponding stamps which succeeded them but with Crown watermarks. So, that year I wrote an article on the subject in the GBJ, Vol. 27, No. 3. At that time I had already been making a note of every example of these two stamps on cover that I had seen, even if only a photograph — check letters, date, where from and where to — and I have continued to do this to the present. I have done this also with the 2s Brown and the 9d Green, but not with the other scarce or rare ones though I have, I think, over the 20 years obtained a very fair idea of rarity for them all.

I have felt for some time that it might be helpful to put my conclusions on paper, and decided a short while ago to write a booklet on the postal usages of the Surface Printed stamps, which will of course deal with their scarcity on cover in some detail, and will

include other features such as the ‘whys’, the ‘wheres’ and the ‘whens’ which I hope will be interesting and useful. This booklet is already in hand.

The reason that I am writing this short piece now is that I fear Theo Brauer’s article may have caused some misunderstanding. The last column of his table is headed ‘Covers known’, and this has already been quoted in at least one sale catalogue. Of course Theo meant ‘known to me’ as a result of his four years’ research, but to a casual reader more concerned with tables and figures it can easily be taken more literally, and misinterpreted.

I would like, therefore, to mention the stamps in the table that I consider most need pointing out.

1. The 4d Brown, Garter (SG 154) — I have noted 29 examples.
2. The 1s Orange, Spray (SG 151) — I have noted 27 examples.
3. The 1s Dull Green (SG 196) — The figure of 10 is clearly much too small. It is not common, but . . .
4. If the previous stamp is included in this list surely the following should be there too:
 - a) 9d, Large Letters, Emblems (SG 98)
 - b) 1s Orange, Crown (SG 163)
 - c) 4d Vermilion, Coloured Letters (Plate 15) (SG 152)
 and others which with justice could claim inclusion.

I do not wish to belittle Theo Brauer’s work, and I realise his figures are designed as a foundation on which other philatelists and postal historians are invited to build: I am only concerned that as they stand they may well be misleading. ☒

Books

COLLECT BRITISH STAMPS, 2001 (52nd) edn. Size 194 x 164 mm, soft-bound, 176 pp. Published by Stanley Gibbons, 2000. Price £7.95. ISBN 0-85259-499-2.

The latest edition of SG’s useful and well-produced simplified checklist has had the pricing revised throughout and includes all British stamps issued up to and including 7 November 2000.

MJ



Focus on GB

KGV Royal Cypher 1d printing variety



I recently wrote to our KGV Consultant **Les Wilkinson** and enclosed this 1d Control T 22 strip of three which has a flaw on R20/12. He suggested it was worth putting in the GBJ and should be recorded as other members may have similar pieces

which have gone unnoticed. Les thought it may have come from a late printing although the plate is not known. Although it is probably not a plate flaw (which are usually 'white') it may be a constant variety.

STEVE BAINBRIDGE

KGV Block Cypher 1d Control D 25

Steve Bainbridge has sent me copies of three pieces of the Block Cypher 1d showing two positions of Control D 25 together with a note pointing out that the *SG Specialised* only lists this control with Plate 6. As far as I know, all these issues were printed from pairs of plates, so it is not



surprising two control settings have turned up for D 25. Whether this is actually from another plate, or is another setting on the same plate; or even whether one or both is from Philatelic Plate 6, remains to be seen! Chances are one is from Plate 6 and the other from its companion plate. They should be equally common (or scarce).

The SG listing for this value is very incomplete (through no fault on SG's part), mainly because the plate markings are often not near to the control. I am dealing with these and similar 'unplateable' issues by sorting them by control position and giving each position an 'unknown' plate number: Plate U1, U2, U3, etc. Again, unless there is a plate flaw or other repeated characteristic, I don't know if these different positions are different plates, or different settings, but at least I can classify them.

MJ

The College Stamp Covers in the Royal Collection

Vincent West

In 1957 Deal listed in detail the 138 College stamp covers known to him¹, 135 from Oxford and three from Cambridge, including 22 Oxford covers in the Royal Philatelic Collection. Though other covers have come to light since, Deal's listing still includes the majority. For the Royal Collection he relied mainly on Wilson's catalogue² which provides few details, so consequently these covers were inadequately described. Some of the covers were published by Cummings in 1904³. The present article, based on an examination of the covers, aims to fill this gap in Deal's list. The opportunity has been taken to describe two used Oxford postal stationery items, outside Deal's scope. All the material is published, and the photographs are reproduced, by gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen.

Three of the covers (Nos 6, 11 and 12 in the table) are from the Bacon find⁴, thus described by Turner⁵:

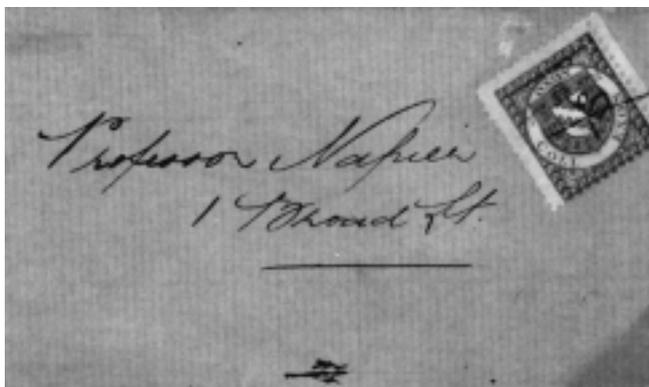


Fig. 1 — Exeter College (SG CS3, Lister 40/41), front of cover No. 20.

... it was indeed fortunate that just about a year ago the leading and oldest established firm of accountants in this city [F. and H. Bacon] very kindly allowed me access to their private correspondence between the years 1871 and 1885, when after a patient search, extending over fifteen hours, I brought to light specimens of most of the adhesives used on the original envelopes, each envelope having been dated the day it was received by the firm in question. The "find" was undoubtedly a most valuable one, including as it did several stamps whose existence had been forgotten, one of them being a copy of the Merton adhesive, Type III, which so far seems to be unique [others have since been recorded]. By the aid of these dated letters, about forty in number, the chronological order of some of the issues was ascertained, besides which it became possible to fix the exact time when the stamps themselves were in use.

Seven of the covers (Nos 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 21 and 24) are from the Mallam (Solicitors) correspondence⁶. At least one Mallam cover 'was found in 1894 by a doctor's son when home from school, among his friend, Mr. T. Mallam's office accumulations (since destroyed)'⁷.

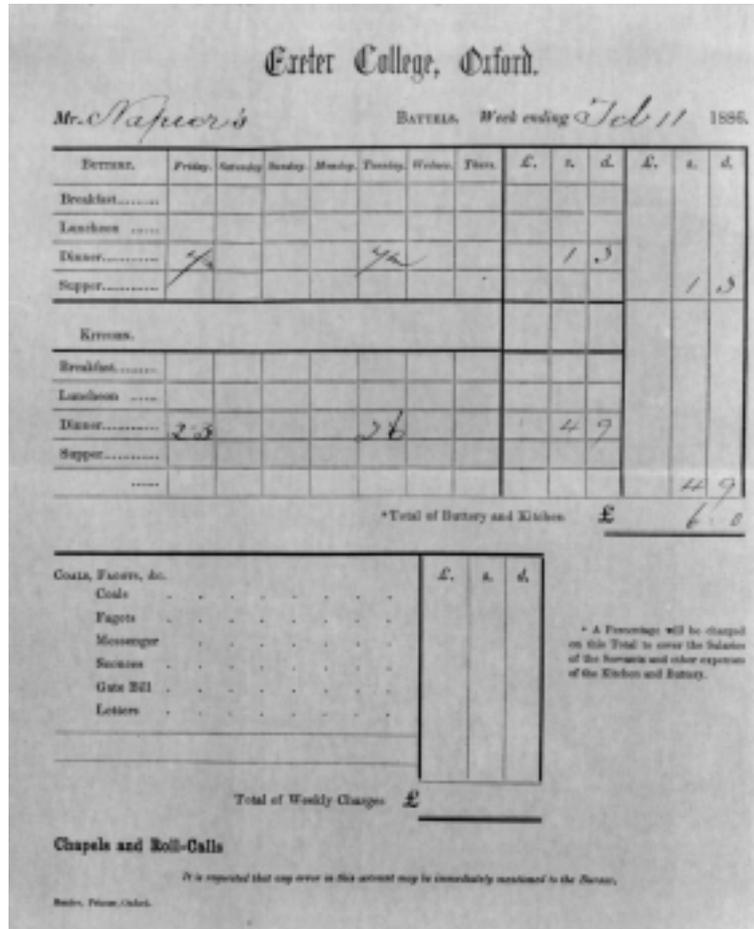


Fig. 2 — Exeter College, inside of cover No. 20.

Nine of the covers (Nos 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 22, 23 and 24) contain the original correspondence. All but two of these (Nos 16 and 20) relate to overdue accounts with tradesmen and two enclosed substantial sums of money (£3 10s in gold in No. 10, 17s 8d in No. 11), entrusting them to the Keble College messenger.

The following table provides details for the covers. Each is given a sequential number (1 to 24) and Deal number where appropriate (from 1 within each issue). The addressee is recorded as written, *italics* indicating uncertain readings as handwriting is not always clear. Any dates and obliterations are noted. Comments draw attention to points of interest. The stamps are positioned at the top right or bottom left and oriented up, down, right or left.

THE COLLEGE STAMP COVERS IN THE ROYAL COLLECTION

No.	Deal No.	Addressee	Date on Cover?	Obliteration	Comments
Keble College, first issue (SG ⁸ CS5, Lister ⁹ 1) ¹⁰					
1	1	Mrs. Lucas / Gt. George St / Oxford	Undated	Official handstamp (OHS) of five dots	
2	2	T. Os(<i>or r</i>)well / 9 Oriel St	Undated	OHS	
3	3	Mr. Bond / No. 2. / St Giles	Undated	OHS	
4	4	Mr. Lord / 10 Museum Terrace	Undated	OHS	This address occurs on another Keble cover ¹¹
5	5	V. Atkin, / Grocer / 7, Broad St	Undated	OHS	Stamp imperf. on two sides (from NW corner of sheet)
Keble College, second issue (SG CS5b, Lister 2)					
6	1	F. Bacon Esq / 30 Broad Street, / Oxford. Endorsed orthogonally 'H. L. Davenport / re / a/cs'	28 Jan: 75	OHS	Cummings p. 14 ¹²
Keble College, third issue (SG CS6, Lister 3)					
7	1	M. Baxter Esqr. / 24, High St / Oxford	Undated	OHS	Stamp imperf. at right
8	2	Messrs. T & G Mallam / Solicitor / 126 High Street	Undated	OHS	
Keble College, fourth issue (SG CS7, Lister 4)					
9	1	Messrs Mallam/ Sollicitors [<i>sic</i>] / High St	Undated	OHS twice	
Keble College, fifth issue (SG CS8, Lister 5/6)					
10	1	T & G Mallam / 126 Hight [<i>sic</i>] St / Oxford	22nd May 1879	OHS	With original letter from G. A. Hicks which enclosed £3 10s in cash (gold) in part-settlement of accounts
Keble College, sixth issue (SG CS9, Lister 7/8)					
11	1	Messrs. F. & H. Bacon, / 31 Broad Street, / Oxford Endorsed orthogonally 'Cash 17/8' and 'Mr. Brown / re / ac/s'	Recd 26 Jan: '81	None	With Brown's original letter which enclosed 17s 8d in cash in settlement of an account
Keble College, seventh issue (SG CS10, Lister 9)					
12	1	Mr Bacon/ Broad St Endorsed orthogonally 'D'Aeth / & Bates.'	15 May 85	None	With D'Aeth's original letter re Bates account

THE COLLEGE STAMP COVERS IN THE ROYAL COLLECTION

No.	Deal No.	Addressee	Date on Cover?	Obliteration	Comments
Merton College, second issue (SG CS12a, Lister 19)					
13	1	J Richards / 104 High Street / Oxford	Nov.3.80 ¹³	None	Folded pencilled note from J. S. Redmayne. Cummings p. 43
14	2, 7 ¹⁴	P. E. Raynor Esq. / New Coll.	Undated	None	Circular portion of stamp only. Deal mentions this originally covered a note (now lost) from an undergraduate J. S. O. Tombs at Merton 1876–79
Merton College, fourth issue (SG CS14, Lister 21/22)					
15	1	Professor Napier / Merton College	Jan 1886 vertically at left in pencil	Pencil mark	Arthur Sampson Napier became a collector of college stamps. For another cover to him see No. 20
Hertford College (SG CS4, Lister 25)					
16	1	The Revd. / G. S. Ward. / New Coll: Lane	Undated	Official handstamp – cross pattée fitchée	The College Bursar. With part-letter enclosed. He is the addressee of another cover ¹⁵
Lincoln College (SG CS11, Lister 36–39)					
17	1	Thos Mallam Esqre. / Solicitor / High Street	Undated	None	
18	2	Mess. T. & G. Mallam/ Sollicitors [<i>sic</i>] / High St.	Undated	None	
19	3	Mrs Mosely/ 14 St Giles' / Oxford	Undated	Smudge	
Exeter College (SG CS3, Lister 40/41)					
20	1	Professor Napier / 1 Broad St:	'Week ending Feb 11 1886' on account	'e' with a line through it in pencil	College 'battels' account for 6s for dinners (for front and inside see Figs 1 and 2). The list of chargeable items includes 'Messenger' and 'Letters'. Cummings p. 75. For another cover to the same person see No. 15
St John's College (SG CS13, Lister 44/45)					
21	1	Messrs. T & G Mallam / 126 High Street.	Undated	None	
22	2	Foster & Co. / Tailors/ High Street / Oxford. Marked ' <u>Private.</u> ' at top left	Undated	Pen/pencil cross	With original letter from J. S. Browne re account

THE COLLEGE STAMP COVERS IN THE ROYAL COLLECTION

No.	Deal No.	Addressee	Date on Cover?	Obliteration	Comments
POSTAL STATIONERY					
Keble College Postcard (Lister 11–13)					
23	—	Mr P. B. Davies, / 4 Park Road, / Oxford.	1.III.82	None	Note on back from E. H. Sweet re account
Keble College Envelope (Lister 14/15)					
24	—	Mr. Thos ^s : Mallam / 126 High St / Oxford	June 1886	None	With original letter from E. S. I. Maclure re H. Walker's account

References

- Deal, A. J. A. 'Oxford and Cambridge College Stamps. A Descriptive Record of Entires Bearing the Adhesive Stamps', *The London Philatelist*, Vol. 66, 1957, pp. 50–53, 67–72. As he noted some covers may be recorded twice (see Refs 6 and 14 for two definite duplications).
- Wilson, Sir J. *The Royal Philatelic Collection*, London, 1952 at p. 55.
- Cummings, Revd H. *The College Stamps of Oxford and Cambridge*, Oxford, 1904.
- Deal records 26 Bacon covers, not including these three.
- Turner, J. R. F. 'The Oxford University Emissions', *The London Philatelist*, Vol. 3, 1894 at p. 93.
- Deal records 22 Mallam covers, not including these seven. The 22 should be reduced to 21 as for Merton College his first issue No. 1 is actually of the second issue, being the same cover as his No. 6 of that issue (author's collection).
- The British Philatelist*, Vol. 31, 1938/9, p. 87.
- SG references are to Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue Volume 1: Queen Victoria*, 11th edition, 1997.
- Lister, R. *College Stamps of Oxford and Cambridge*, 1966.
- Deal noted that his number 17 or 18 might possibly have been listed under his numbers 1 to 5, but this is not the case.
- Keble sixth issue, Deal 11 'Front to "Slatter & Rose, The Exchange and Mart" in pencil with "Colbeck, 10 Museum Terrace" in ink, at lower left'.
- Illustrated opposite p. 12, but oddly the photograph shows part of the address missing as if it had been somehow obscured.
- But 'Novr. 23rd. / 80' on note.
- Deal 2 = Deal 7 (for the second issue of Merton) as Deal himself thought possible.
- A stamped wrapper to him at 'Fellows Lodgings, Hertford Coll' containing the original supply of stamps (Deal 3).