



The Overprint

Newsletter of the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club

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MESSAGE FROM MIKE:

This is let all of you that have received the "Overprint" since January 2015, that this is the last one you will be receiving from me. I have notified the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club Committee members of my decision and hopefully they will find someone to step up and take this over. It was not easy coming to this decision but I still work full-time and I feel this is the right time for a change. Over the last 9 years I have produced over 80 editions of the Overprint and I hope during the course of that time you have found them interesting for the most part. I hope that the RSCC Overprint will continue, maybe in a different format.

Mike Bach

Meetings held at Calvary Lutheran Church, 1009 Elizabeth Avenue
in Laureldale. Elizabeth Avenue crosses Kutztown Road in the Muhlenberg Township area. Most meetings
are the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. See you there!

Tuesday, November 7th

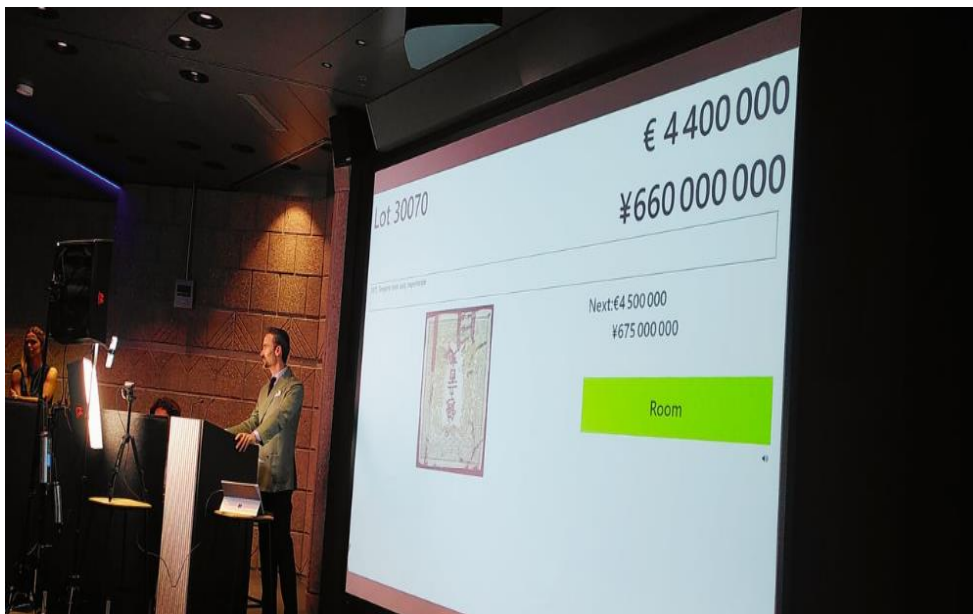
MEETING CANCELED DUE TO ELECTIONS

TREASURER'S REPORT:

As of September 30th: Account Balance \$ 1,276.27. CD as of 12/31/2022: \$ 3,076.00.
In October there have additional receipts of \$ 255.00 and expenses of \$ 50.00 for a
current balance of \$ 1,481.27. Show payments to be received total \$ 115.00.

IS THIS THE SECOND MOST EXPENSIVE STAMP IN THE WORLD?

Japan stamp sells for world record price of 5.4 million Euros
(Approx, \$ 5.72 Million)
by Estelle Leclerc | Jun 3, 2023



On Saturday, June 3, David Feldman International Auctioneers had the great honour to offer one of most important Japanese stamp collections including **the most valuable stamp of Asia: the 500 mon Inverted Center.**



An Asian gentleman, bidding via phone, was delighted to become the buyer. The underbidder, an esteemed European collector, was very disappointed to be outbid. He said, “I had prepared my bid as high as 4 million Euros and even made a few more steps, but now I must congratulate the new owner!”.

In 1871, the first series of Japanese stamps comprised stamps featuring a dragon framing the denomination in “mon” currency which was inserted in the center. One sheet of the highest value, the 500 mon, had the center value inverted, and **only one stamp with this error has ever been discovered**, and that was over 100 years later in 1973 by an American collector. The stamp was immediately acknowledged as the most important one in Japanese philately, and from that moment onwards it rose in fame and value through private sales, from a mere \$75,000 at that time to millions over the last 50 years.

It was the first time that this stamp was auctioned since it was first sold in 1973.

COMING IN JANUARY 2024

NEW POSTAL RATES FOR THE USPS

Product	Current prices	Planned prices
Letters (1 ounce)	66 cents	68 cents
Additional Ounce (no Change)	24 cents	24 cents
Letters (metered 1 ounce)	63 cents	64 cents
Domestic postcards	51 cents	53 cents
International postcards	\$1.50	\$1.55
International letter (1 ounce)	\$1.50	\$1.55

The “María Clotilde” Collection of Mexico



We are delighted to announce the impressive series of auction sales of the “María Clotilde” collection of Mexico.

On **December 5th**, the first part of this collection will be sold at auction in Geneva (Switzerland). The sale will feature the **classic issues of “Hidalgos” & “Eagles”** and some **rarities of the semi-modern period**. It will include a significant range of usages of the “number one”, a remarkable number of **“Eagles” from the Corbett collection** originating from small towns, an important selection of 3 centavos, including some of the very rare examples cancelled and the finest of the three unused overprinted pairs, as well as some spectacular frankings on cover, such as the **largest multiple of the 1864 2r**, or a four-color franking on registered mail.

The two key items are considered as the most important items of Mexican philately, the great gems originating from the Erich Koenig collection: **the only usage recorded of the “Eagles” 3c on cover, and the finer of only two inverted centers recorded of the 1921 10c “Abrazo de Acatenpam”**.

The catalogue will be available online in a few weeks. If you want to receive additional information or the catalogue, please feel free to [contact us](#) today!

Stay tuned!



THE “FERRARY” 3C PAIR

THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF THE LARGEST 3C OVERPRINTED MULTIPLE

Mexico District 3c brown, consignment 48-1866, a remarkable pair exhibiting two slightly overlapping designs in centre as a result of a misplaced cliché, margins ranging from clear to ample and displaying a great freshness.

The finest of just three pairs recorded, this multiple representing the largest recorded for this stamp, with this example being unique showing all margins complete.



“EL ABRAZO DE ACATEMPAN”

The rarest Stamp of Mexican Philately

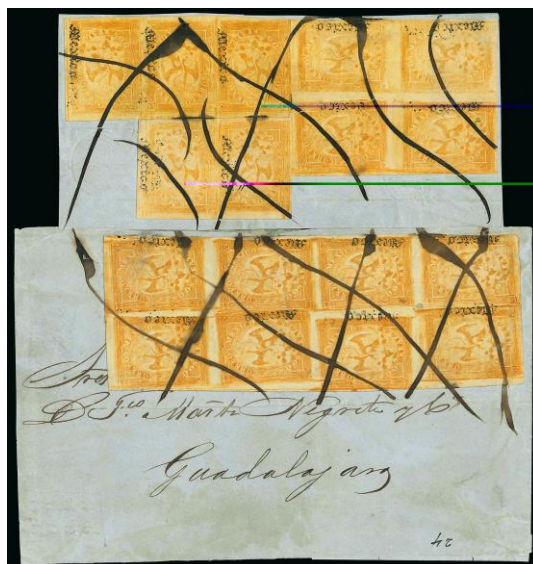
A GREAT GEM OF THE INVERTED CENTERS OF THE WORLD

Undoubtedly considered as the most important stamp of Mexican philately, with only two examples recorded, this being the finer. *The other example known possesses a duplex cancellation which is believed to have been applied in Guadalajara, and which was struck covering a large place of the center inverted.* Illustrated in the “*Encyclopedia of Rare and Famous Stamps*” by L. N. Williams (published by David Feldman, Geneva, in 1993), as the only stamp representing Mexico in this highly renowned encyclopaedia. **A true world rarity.**



THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM OF MEXICAN PHILATELY

This 3c is one of the scarcest values of classic Mexico, and the rarest and most prestigious stamp on cover in Mexican philately, this being unique as stated to be genuine with full confidence. Together with the “Abrazo de Acatempan”, also offered in this sale, both can be considered as the most important items of Mexican philately.



THE LARGEST 2 REALES USED MULTIPLE KNOWN

The largest used multiple known of this value, as well as the largest franking recorded. An exhibition item of great visual impact.

Queen's beloved £100m hobby that King Charles has inherited but will not continue

King Charles is said to not have shared the same passion as his late mother who enjoyed an expensive royal hobby that had been passed down through the generations.

By Rebecca RussellRoyal Reporter [Nicola Croal](#)SEO Writer 09:12, 21 OCT 2023

It's well known that the [Royal Family](#) have some very expensive pastimes from polo and carriage driving to grouse hunting. Despite being one among one of the most privileged families in the world, the [royals](#) still enjoy normal hobbies too and it seems that stamp collecting has proved to be a solid favourite for many members of [the Firm](#) over the years.

As ordinary as this therapeutic activity may sound, in true royal fashion the family's stamp collection is valued at a whopping £100m, [OK!](#) reports.

While the late Queen and many of her ancestors, stretching all the way back to Queen Victoria's reign, all shared a similar interest in the past time, the same cannot be said for King Charles who prefers to spend his free time painting or gardening.

The former monarch was the fifth royal to add to the world famous Royal Philatelic Collection, following on from its inauguration by Queen Victoria's son, Prince Alfred in 1864. The Royal Philatelic Collection is the world's finest and most comprehensive collection of British and Commonwealth stamps.

Prince Alfred sold his collection to his brother, the future King Edward VII who in turn gave it to his son, King George V. It was subsequently passed down to King George VI and finally Queen Elizabeth herself.

Stamps first came into circulation on May 6 1840 during the early reign of Queen Victoria when it cost just one penny to send a letter which weighed under half an ounce. Of all the royal custodians, King George V was very dedicated to maintaining and growing the collection.

While he was still the Duke of York, the prince was made the honorary Vice President of what would go on to become the Royal Philatelic Society of London in 1893. King George V's dedication to his beloved hobby had no limits and he even set the record for the highest price ever paid for a stamp.

A courtier asked the-then prince in 1904 if he had seen "that some damned fool had paid as much as £1,450 for a single stamp" to which George replied: "Yes, I am that damned fool."

The thrill of stamp collecting was on passed from grandfather to his granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth who referred to King George V 'Grandpa England'. The late monarch inherited her grandfather's 328 albums of stamps.

Speaking before the late Queen's death in September last year, royal expert Phil Dampier said: "The Queen loves showing her stamp collection to visitors, say heads of state who stay at Buckingham Palace. "It is one of her pride and joys, not only because she owns some of the world's most valuable stamps, but also because she has built on a family treasure and feels she has done her father and previous monarchs who owned it proud."

The former monarch added several impressive additions to the collection but her passion has not been shared by her eldest son, King Charles. The King focuses his attention on painting and at the start of 2022, he saw 79 of his watercolours exhibited at The Garrison Chapel in Chelsea. The-then Prince of Wales spoke of his hobby on a display panel as he said that painting "refreshes parts of the soul which other activities can't reach".

EDITOR'S NOTE:

[This may be the end of an era unless Prince William takes up the mantle. We will see.](#)

PRINTING BRITISH STAMPS

The stamp story of Perkins Bacon

In the first part of a new series going behind the scenes of companies that printed British stamps from 1840 onwards, David Bailey charts the stamp story of Perkins Bacon



Jacob Perkins (1766-1849) was an American inventor; he made machines for making nails and boring out cannons and pioneered the developments in heating technology that led to the refrigerator.

However, in the early 1800s, he began working on a method of security printing that would be all but impossible to forge.

He picked the right time. The world's treasuries were switching from bullion to paper money, while the Pax Britannica had led to a massive increase in world trade and manufacturing activity, requiring corporate bonds, share certificates and other official documentation.

The job posed two major challenges.

Firstly, to create a design intricate enough to defeat even the most expert forgers.

Secondly, to reproduce that design throughout the extended print runs that treasuries require, creating literally millions of perfect copies.

The first problem was solved by engineering and the development of engine-turning machinery, which created patterns called Guilloches. The most sophisticated of these was the Rose Engine lathe, which created similar patterns to a spirograph. Perkins patented a modified machine, which created the frame and background for all the lines engraved.

The second solution was metallurgical. A master die was cut in soft steel, which was hardened to the extent that ordinary metal tools wouldn't even scratch it. The die was then used to make impressions in a



Above: Jacob Perkins and (top and below) the two dies used on the 1d stamps

transfer roller – also of soft steel. This again was hardened and used to 'rock in' 240 impressions on the printing plate itself, which was then hardened in its turn. So a single master die could produce any number of plates, while sustaining very little wear on itself.

By 1818, the Perkins method of printing was mandatory for all banks operating in Perkins' home state of Massachusetts and was beginning to attract attention elsewhere.

Meanwhile in Britain, the forgery of £1 notes was causing a major problem so the Bank of England announced a competition to print a forgery-proof note. The British Minister in the USA recommended Perkins to enter, so after teaming up with an engraver called Fairman, the two crossed the Atlantic early in 1819.

accompanied by more than 26 crates of machinery.

They didn't win the £20,000 prize (no foreigner could print Britannia's notes) but other British banks had no such qualms and Perkins' business flourished.

Based at 69 Fleet Street, the company went through some changes of name as partners came and left – but in common with other sources, this article will refer to 'Perkins Bacon' throughout.

The company did not enter the Treasury Competition for producing stamps. Misreading the brief, they thought that the Treasury wanted 'some cheap kind of thing' the size of an envelope and that their process would be too expensive.

With no obvious winner of the competition, Rowland Hill's deputy, Henry Cole, approached Perkins Bacon directly. He called on the firm on 2 December 1839 and re-assured them that the master die need only be about an inch in size.

Next day, they responded with a quote of 6d-8d per thousand stamps; the final figure depending on the size of the die, the number of stamps per sheet and the numbers required. They could start printing in a month and produce 41,600 stamps in a single day shift, using one machine.

The machines they used were D roller copperplate presses (another Perkins invention). The paper is pressed into the inked plate using a roller, which returns automatically to the operator after each pass. Gumming was another matter – and one that the company was not over-keen to tackle – but they ended up experimenting with different gums from different suppliers and testing various methods



for applying the adhesive to the printed, dried sheets. But the results were never entirely satisfactory.

Right up until the launch of the stamps, the Post Office thought that the Mulready envelopes would be more popular. Instead, the envelopes were laughed at while demand for the 1d and 2d stamps meant that Perkins Bacon were soon printing round the clock. In response to this, the Commissioners for Stamps and Taxes agreed to pay an extra three halfpence per thousand stamps for stamps printed at night – on top of the agreed 7½d per thousand for the day shift.

As red succeeded black, and production continued to increase, the build-up of worn-out plates began to be a problem – especially when they could be up to 3" thick. These were defaced as a matter of course and proofs were taken and submitted to the Commissioners to show this had been done. Eventually, the Commissioners agreed that the plates could then be sent away (to a Messrs Dewsnaps) to be ground flat by stones, then returned to Perkins Bacon to be re-tempered, polished and used again.

Production stopped for two months in 1844. The Commissioners were giving Perkins Bacon extra work to handle and the stamp-printing machines needed to move to another part of the building. In June, the presses started working flat out, day and night. After 26 days, they had built up enough stocks to see them through the break, while the builders did their job. The new machine room was up and running by September.

Between 1845 and 1879, the number of machines it held grew from 6 to 38. Perkins Bacon had conducted extensive trials of a steam-powered printing press in 1855-6. But they were unsuccessful and the project was abandoned. The



first 1d black and the last 1d plate were printed on the same machines.

The 1852 Britannia stamp of Barbados. This is the 4d value

Foreign business

Stamps were catching on – and Perkins Bacon were one of the few companies in the world who knew how to print them. So they began to attract business from abroad. Britain's colonies, dominions and protectorates were almost a captive audience – but they also had success in foreign countries. Britain had long enjoyed strong trading links with South America, and their biggest customer here was Chile, where Perkins Bacon worked with Lyon Brothers – agents for the Chilean Government.

There were three London printings; 1852-3, 1854 and 1859. The first two were just for the 5c and 10c and initially, they needed 300,000 x 5c and 200,000 x 10c.

In 1859, the order included two

new values: 1c and 20c and the total quantity was 3,000,000.

But Perkins Bacon didn't just supply the stamps. Included in the packages were printing plates, papers and moulds for making more. Plus inks for printing and cancelling the stamps, gallons of gum and cancellation devices – even (in 1854) a printing machine complete with operating instructions. In short, there was everything required to set up as stamp printers – except the skilled, experienced labour. Locally-printed stamps from London plates were not considered a success.

Perkins Bacon printed stamps for 31 countries of the British Empire, working through the Crown Agents and direct with the territories themselves.

Liberated from using the Wyon Medal they'd been printing for nearly 15 years, they could explore the possibilities of other formats, other colours and other royal portraits. The results ranged from the versatile Britannia design for smaller territories to the lozenges for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Chalon Heads of Ceylon and the Cape Triangulars; a gallery of classic stamps to rival the Penny Black.

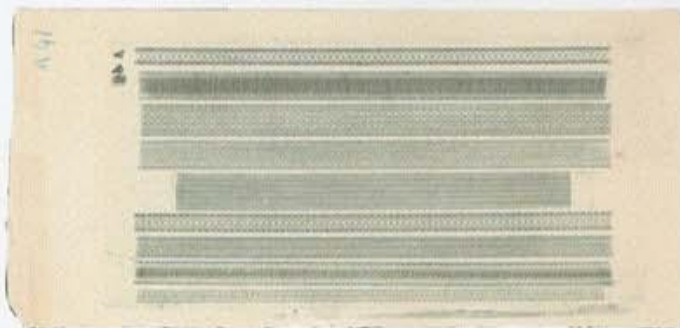
British stamps, however, would always take priority – and this could cause problems.

In 1855, the Government of South Australia wrote to complain about the length of time it was taking to produce their 1d and 6d stamps. They received a long, explanatory letter in return, stating how the plates for the GB 1d stamp had begun to wear out faster than before, until they were producing just 25% of their previous totals. They therefore needed to be replaced that much more often and this was tying up the platemaking machinery to the exclusion of other work.

The company had investigated every possible reason for this, before being forced to confront the unthinkable; the original die was wearing out, when they had estimated it would last 100 years.

They went on to explain that the die had now been replaced – and duplicated – so such a delay would not happen again.

Along with the increases in production, there was also a growing interest in the stamps themselves. This had implications for stamp printers that Perkins Bacon had not foreseen.



A gallery of Guilloches, as used for the 1d black



The 3d from Nova Scotia.
Note the four flower symbols

In 1861, Rowland Hill's nephew Ormond wrote to MD Joshua Butters Bacon, asking for any remainder stamps he might have, for 2 or 3 friends who were collectors. Bacon was keen to oblige and ended up sending six copies of every stamp available, neatly cancelled by a special handstamp. They were sent to Rowland Hill's son Pearson, inviting him to take a few copies for himself before sending them on to Ormond.

Unfortunately, a few weeks later, Penrose Julyan – Agent General for the Crown Colonies – got wind of the arrangement and was outraged by it, writing to Perkins Bacon that they should not let a single impression go out of their hands in any state whatever.

He went on to demand the return of all their British colonies plates and dies. These were handed over in August 1862 and passed on to De la Rue.

Losing all their Colonial work was not the catastrophe it might have been. The company was printing British revenue stamps as well as postage. The Post Office had commissioned a new 1½d stamp in 1860, which was ready that year although not required until 1870. And in 1864, the 1d stars were replaced by the 1d plates.

In order to ensure a continuity of supply for the new stamps, 22 plates needed to be ready to go.

This proved more problematic than expected, as four of the first batch of

plates were rejected because of their poor alignment. Platemaking speeded up somewhat after that and the plates were rolled out from April 1864.

In 1870 came a request for another new stamp – for ½d – which meant new designs, a new profile for the Queen, new ornament and a new watermark for the halfpenny paper. It was all ready by October.

Serious competition

The pressures of daily work go some way to explaining how Perkins Bacon failed to see the threats on the horizon.

The idea of letterpress (surface) printing had first come up in 1851, with

the Prince Consort Essays. Henry Archer was disappointed with the fee offered for his work on perforating machines, so he decided to have a go at the entire contract. Advised not to use Queen Victoria, he created some sample stamps featuring Prince Albert instead. These could be printed by letterpress for 4½d per thousand, which undercut Perkins Bacon and would be easier to perforate; letterpress was a 'dry' process, line engraving was not, so the sheets shrank when they dried.

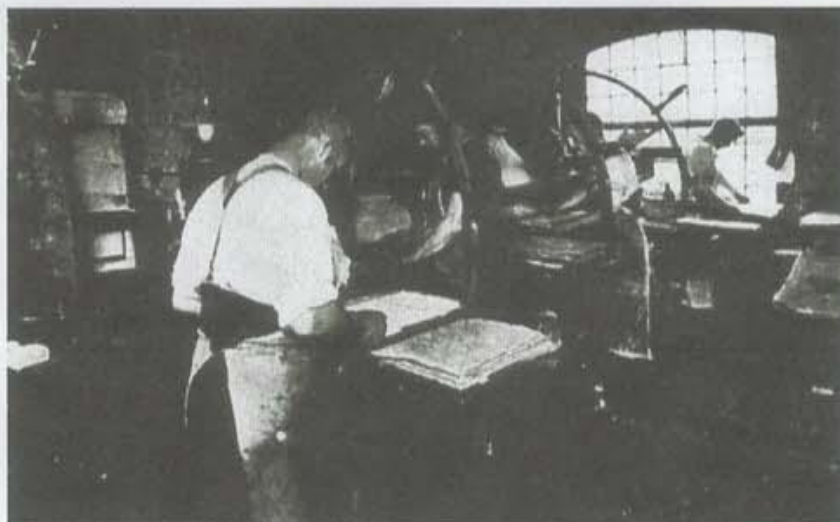
The matter was discussed in Parliament, which decided not to change, although Perkins Bacon had to reduce their prices to match.

The need for higher value stamps created an anomalous situation in the Post Office.

The embossed issues for 6d, 10d and 1/- were slow and expensive to produce, and when a new 4d rate was needed, the Post Office had chosen De la Rue to print it, along with the 6d and 1/- values, too. We will look at this in more detail next month – but for now, Britain's high value stamps were printed quickly and cheaply while a slower, more expensive method was used for the millions of stamps from ½ to 2d.

The rationale behind Perkins Bacon's printing was always the security provided by the intricate engraving. But what applies to a £1 note doesn't always apply to a 1d stamp and as time passed so the threats to the revenue changed from forgery to the removal of cancellations by newly-discovered solvents. The 'Rainbow Trial' had been

Perkins Bacon & Co
Printers London Interior
(Magite Historic / Alamy
Stock Photo)





over 30 years ago.

In May 1878, the Inland Revenue wrote to Perkins Bacon that a certain fluid 'which it is not desirable to name', would remove the cancellations from the ½d, 1d, 1½d and 2d stamps without leaving any detectable marks. However, when applied to the stamps of other values, it wiped off the ground colour along with the cancellation. They went on to ask if Perkins Bacon could produce the low value stamps by the same method as De la Rue and if so, at what price.

Perkins Bacon replied that line engraving was preferable to surface printing for artistic and security reasons – the latter just as relevant for the low-value stamps as for the higher ones. So before changing processes, they asked for time to develop fugitive inks for line engraving. This was granted – and Perkins Bacon set to work. In June, they submitted a number of sheets for evaluation, but the colours rubbed off and the proposed solution – rolling the sheets after printing – would not work.

Perkins Bacon submitted new colours in a new formulation for another trial but it was all too late. Next to the surface prints, the line engraved stamps looked like antiques: hand printed on thick handmade papers and coated with gum that sometime wouldn't stick, they were an anachronism in a world of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines, produced on steam presses. In December notice came of the termination of their contract.

Life after stamps

The stamp contract accounted for two thirds of Perkins Bacon's business. With its loss, they turned the machine room over to letterpress printing and bought a trade paper *The Grocers Journal* to print and publish. But the move downmarket was not very profitable and not welcomed by some of their other customers, who went elsewhere.

The firm became a limited company in 1887. Then in 1904, they split off the letterpress printing and publishing business to a separate company – but the move was badly (some say fraudulently) handled, leaving just the engraving.

Transfer roller die for four penny full-face Queen (Chalon Head) postage stamp, 1865, England, by Perkins, Bacon & Co. (The New Zealand Post Museum Collection, Gift of New Zealand Post Ltd., 1992, NZ/BT / Alamy Stock Photo)

flat-bed printing and lithographic business, with premises in Southwark Bridge Road.

Over the years, a number of trade sample sheets, showing their engraving prowess, have come onto the market. These are believed to date from the early 20th century and may have been used as decoration or as a reference for stamp dealers. But the fact that all the stamps they show date back to the 1860s suggests that they were not used for getting new clients. The company went out of business altogether in 1935.

Perkins Bacon & Co
Printers London building

Next month: we explore the stamps created by printers De La Rue





Another Day, Another Coin on a Stamp

JEFF STAGE





Above, from left: Figure 10, Cyprus Scott 114 marks its link to British rule; Figure 11, the first stamps of Israel were inspired by ancient coins (Scott 1 shown); Figure 12, Tunisia Scott 365 (issued 1959).

You might be surprised if I told you that it would probably take several books to properly examine all of the world's stamps that show coins.

I was astounded when I checked the American Topical Association (ATA) website and found that the Coins, Currency and Banknotes checklist currently identifies 1,850 stamps that show monetary pieces. That's more than military fighter planes (1,722), rabbits (1,136) and the combined total (701) for artists da Vinci (368) and Michelangelo (333).

From faux to iconic and ancient to modern, any type of coin from just about any place has been shown on stamps. Following is a very brief survey of stamps showing coins. (Although numismatics also include paper money and medals, we'll limit ourselves here to coins on stamps.)

Interestingly, the first coin to appear on a stamp isn't a real coin at all, according to *What's First?*, a book published from the ATA about first appearances on postage stamps.

In need of a high-value stamp for shipping parcels and sending telegrams, New South Wales issued a 5-shilling stamp in 1861, later reissued in 1897 (Figure 1) that shows an image of a coin (some say it's a medallion, but this author chooses to ignore them) with a prime vignette of a female royal, presumably Queen Victoria. The coin on the stamp is a fabrication by printer De La Rue.

The U.S. has issued at least eight postage stamps showing coins, though it took more than a century for the first and it's been more than 20 years since the U.S. last issued a stamp showing a coin.

The first U.S. appearance of a coin – well, a coin-like image – is on the American Bankers Association stamp (Figure 2), issued January 3, 1950, honoring the 75th anniversary of the formation of the association. The stamp's main vignette in the center appears to be on the top part of a coin (note the

ridges; reeded edges). The image symbolizes various fields of the banking service. The stamp was designed by Charles R. Chickering of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Images of more coins started showing up on U.S. stamps in the mid-1970s.

A pair of stamp releases from 1975 show coins. The second is obvious; the first I admit I missed for many years.

Part of the voluminous American Bicentennial series of stamps include a set of four Contributing to the Cause stamps, including one showing Financial Hero Haym Salomon (Figure 3). Look closely and you will see a few Spanish coins, which were the coins of the time in the colonies.

Coins much easier to see are on the se-tenant (attached) pair (Figure 4) for Banking and Commerce, which honored the American Bankers Association centennial, issued October 6, 1975. The shown coins – in the middle of the pair, with parts appearing on each stamp – are portions of a Morgan silver dollar (not issued until 1878), a \$20 Liberty gold coin, a seated Liberty quarter and an Indian Head cent dated 1875. V. Jack Ruther was the designer. A smaller-than-normal domestic first class stamp, then at 13 cents, issued January 11, 1978 shows an 1877 Indian Head penny (Figure 5). The experimental stamp (an attempt to save money) was only three-quarters of an inch on each side, and it was tested in five cities. People hated it (too small; easy to lose). It's unknown why the Postal Service didn't learn its lesson and insisted two years later to create a similarly sized 15-cent Dolley Madison stamp.

In 1981, an 18-cent stamp was issued to honor the Savings and Loan Association's 150th anniversary (Figure 6). It features three coins, all going into a house-shaped coin box: a buffalo nickel, a Barber dime and an Indian Head cent. In 1984, a stamp honored the 50th anniversary of the Fed-

◀From left, top row, the following stamps are shown: Figure 1, New South Wales Scott 44 (issued 1861); Figure 2, U.S. Scott 987; Figure 3, U.S. Scott 1561 (issued 1957); Figure 4, U.S. Scott 1577-8, the Banking and Commerce stamps of 1975; Figure 5, the Indian Head Penny stamp, U.S. Scott 1734; Figure 6, U.S. Scott 1911 honors the Savings and Loan banking system; Figure 7, U.S. Scott 2075; Figure 8, U.S. Scott 2558 honors numismatics; and Figure 9, Crete Scott 78 (issued 1905).

eral Credit Union Act (Figure 7). A portion of a Roosevelt dime is shown.

The most recent U.S. stamp to show coinage is the 29-cent 1991 centennial issue of the American Numismatic Association (Figure 8). The stamp is simply labeled "Numismatics." The stamp shows a portion of a Flying Eagle cent (1856-1858) and a portion of a \$20 Saint-Gaudens gold coin.

Many – likely most – other nations have shown coins on stamps. Just from browsing, it seems to have become a popular practice starting in the 1970s, but there are earlier examples.

Crete was under Turkish rule for a long time but began to receive autonomy in the late 19th century before it became part of Greece in 1913. During those independent years, Crete issued stamps, including three stamps in a 1905 set that show ancient coins. The 25-lepta (Figure 9) shows an image of Triton taken from an ancient coin of the municipality of Itanos.

Cyprus issued a set of 10 stamps on February 1, 1928 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of British rule. The low value of the set (Figure 10) depicts a silver coin of the ancient city of Amathus. The coin shows the head and upper body of a lion.

As I noted at the start, we cannot possibly include all the coins on stamps you can find, so feel free to build your own collection as you see fit. Here are a few choices to get you started.

Israel became independent in 1948 and its first nine stamps, issued May 16 of that year, are two designs in the image of ancient coins (Figure 11). The designs, created in just 24 hours by prolific designer Otte Wallish (1906-1977), were based on coins from the Jewish-Roman War and the Bar Kochba Revolt. The stamps – in standard definitive and commemorative sizes – were printed clandestinely on low quality paper because of the British Mandate on basic print-

ing presses. The stamps do not bear a country name as one had not been chosen at that stage.

A stamp issued by Tunisia in 1959 (Figure 12) shows a female dancer spilling coins from a horn and an antique coin with wings. The stamp was designed by Tunisian artist Hatem El Mekki (1918-2003), finished by French engraver Jean Pheulpin (1907-1991). It commemorates the first anniversary of the Tunisian Central Bank.

Panama's 50th year of independence from Colombia was in 1953. The Central American nation issued a set of six postage stamps on November 3 to celebrate. The high value in the set (Figure 13) shows the obverse and reverse sides of a 1947 1-balboa coin featuring an image of Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa. (Design mystery: why not use the image of a 1953 coin on the stamp?)

Monaco's first coins in three values were produced at the principality's mint in 1837-1838. To honor the 150th anniversary of the mint, Monaco produced a postage stamp (Figure 14) in 1987 that shows a rare 5-franc coin that depicts Honoré V (1778-1841), Prince of Monaco, on the obverse, and the coat of arms of the House of Grimaldi on the reverse. Emile Rogat (1799-1852) engraved the coin.

Italy used coins on stamps on its mail for nearly three decades with the Coins of Syracuse – called Italia Turrita in Italian catalogs – definitive series. The design (Figure 15) is based on an ancient coin – the dekadrachm – from Syracuse, Sicily, which is said to show the head of the nymph Arethusa wearing a wreath of reeds. Like Great Britain's Machins or Norway's Waves, the Coins of Syracuse were a workhorse design launched with eight values in 1953 and ending in 1980. There are many varieties due to watermarks, paper types, sizes, successive printings and design and denomination changes.

A 1972 stamp from Senegal commemorates the 10th anniversary of the West African Monetary Union (Figure



From left: Figure 13, Panama Scott 394, was issued in 1953 and shows a 1-balboa coin of 1947; Figure 14, Monaco Scott 1594 celebrates the 50th anniversary of its mint; Figure 15, Italy Scott 786, is one of many long-running definitives showing an ancient coin from Syracuse.

16) by depicting a couple, a city, a village, and the obverse and reverse sides of a 500-franc coin designed and engraved by French artist Pierre Forget (1923-2005).

Canada Post in 2008 noted the centennial of the Royal Canadian Mint with a 52-cent stamp (Figure 17) depicting the obverse of a 50-cent coin showing the crown and maple leaves. Selva shows the other side of the coin, which shows the profile of King George V. The coin is one of the first printed at the mint and looks well used on the stamp. "A coin is not only a national symbol, but also a part of everyday life," said designer Stéphane Huot in 2008. "So rather than feature a mint-edition copy, I chose a coin that Canadians had actually held in their hands."

Learn more

"1 Decadrachm, Syracuse, about 400 B.C.E." *Smithsonian Institution* (https://www.si.edu/object/1-decadrachm-syracuse-about-400-bce%3Anmah_1255512).

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Arago (online educational website), by the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

Gray, Jack. *What's First?* (American Topical Association, 2018).

"OTD: Dominion of Canada's first domestically produced coin struck in Ottawa," *Canadian Stamp News* (January 2, 2001)

Numista online catalog (<https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces6371.html>).

Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue (Sidney, Ohio: Amos Media).

Taylor, Sol. "Making Cents," *The Signal* (October 8, 2005) (<https://scvhistory.com/scvhistory/signal/coins/sg100805-coins.htm>).



Figure 16. Senegal in 1972 commemorated the 10th anniversary of the West African Monetary Union, Scott 374.



Figure 17. Canada Post in 2008 commemorated the Centennial of the Royal Canadian Mint, Scott 2774.



ARE YOU LOOKING TO SELL A COLLECTION?

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POSTAL HISTORY

Samples of No Value

In the 19th century, manufacturers were afforded a special postal rate to send samples of their goods. John Scott examines some notable examples of this intriguing chapter in postal history

As industry took off in the 19th century there remained the problems posed by long distances and poor road communications, coupled with the expense and time of travelling. Textiles offered manufacturers the ability to send small pieces as samples to prospective customers by post, thus saving considerable expense to both parties, and this extended to other lightweight commodities such as tea. If each sample was to count as a separate piece, similarly to sheets of paper in a letter, then the cost of postage would have been prohibitive and so special rates were introduced for letters endorsed 'Samples of No Value' or 'Echantillons sans Valeur'. The sheer size of European countries meant that the service was used much more widely there than in the UK but sadly most of the surviving letters and wrappers have long since lost the samples they contained.

Of those few which have survived intact, the majority are of rather nondescript felt in various shades of brown, black and grey but just occasionally you can open a letter and see a fantastic array of colours which are as bright as on the date



The outer panel of a letter containing samples of calico from Manchester to the Tyrol via Calais in 1815



The inside contained ten individual samples



A letter from the Quartermaster of the 72nd Highlanders in Barbados in 1849

of manufacture, the folds in the letter having obscured the daylight for centuries. One such example is the letter illustrated here, unusually originating in Manchester, which was carried across the Channel by hand before being posted in Calais to its destination in Bozen, now part of Italy. While postal services between England and France had been restored in 1814 the sender has chosen to use the services of a Forwarding Agent in Calais, Choissard, whose boxed cachet 'Sous

couvert de Choissard de Calais' has been applied in red to the reverse.

They prepaid the postage to Bozen, indicated by the red 'P 61 P Calais' and the boxed 'P.P.P.' (Port Payé Passe Paris). The red crayon '32' indicates the domestic postage payable by the recipient.

Customers also enclosed samples of material, particularly when they wanted to re-order a specific pattern from the manufacturer. This was the case in the letter from the 72nd Highlanders in Barbados in 1849

directed to Wilson & Son, tartan manufacturers in Bannockburn ordering 'one hundred yards soft tartan for Sergeants as p Pattern sent herewith' along with 'fourteen pairs pipers hose white pattern fine cotton, one Glengary Bonnet ornament Regimental Patter & 7 fine Glengary Forage Bonnets'. The Barbados datestamp for 27th August 1849 tells us that the letter left the island on the Royal Mail Steam Packet Eagle and arrived in St. Thomas on 30 August in time to catch the Great Western to Bermuda where the mail was transferred to the Trent, arriving in Southampton on 23 September, in London on the next day and in Stirling on the day after. Although headed 'OHMS' in manuscript this notation carried no weight with the Post Office and the letter was charged 2/- for the packet charge from the West Indies, doubled by virtue of the enclosure.

Samples such as tea required special packaging and another way of collecting this subject can be found in the special stationery, often in the shape of strengthened bags, to which address labels could be attached. Sadly the tea is probably long past its sell-by date but that should not deter the curious from looking inside.

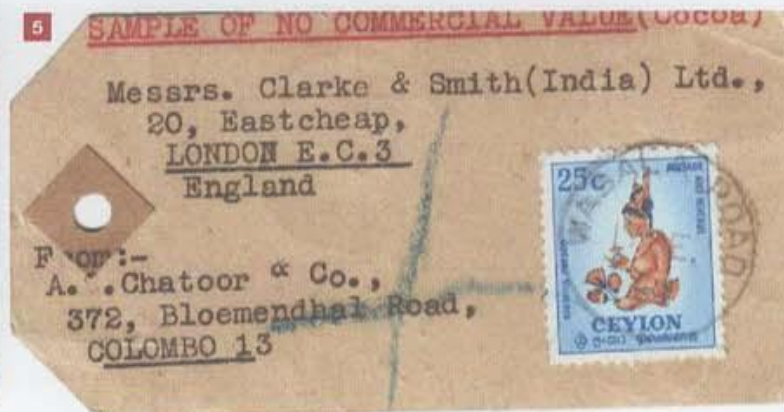
Further Reading

Early Routings of The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842-1879, Phil Kenton & Harry Parsons, The Postal History Society 1999.

Wilson of Bannockburn, Roy Erskine, The Scottish Postal History Society 2011.



The pattern of regimental tartan being re-ordered from Wilson of Bannockburn



The label from a sample of cocoa posted from Colombo to London in 1954



KEEPING IT TOPICAL

Fireworks

Philatelists should remember the fifth of November, because firework-themed stamps will add a touch of sparkle to their collection.



Who doesn't love the glorious sight of the sparks of an exploding firework cascading through the night sky? Even though many of us, especially those with animals, would prefer their sale to be regulated so that Bonfire Night feels less like a warzone full of bangs and whistles and the smell of gunpowder lingering in the air.

A quieter, altogether more peaceful philatelic approach might well involve adding firework-themed stamps to the pages of your collection, so with the anniversary of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the House of Lords on 5 November, let's take a look at some of the postage stamps that have featured pyrotechnics.

One of the earliest stamps on this



fiery theme was part of the 1959 Leipzig sport festival issue from the DDR. With a value of 40+20, and a magenta background, it depicts in white a tower surrounded by celebratory fireworks. In the following year, 1960, a set from Ghana celebrates three years of independence with a four-stamp set including a graphic design of a colourful cluster of fireworks on a purple background – a colour scheme picked up five years later by Israel's 20 years of independence set which also features a stamp with a design of colourful fireworks on

a purple background, this time including a characteristic skyline at the bottom of the stamp image. The colour scheme was picked up again for a 1967 UNO stamp day issue: purple background, colourful fiery displays. A companion stamp in this issue featured the same design on a maroon background.

Many of the postage stamps featuring fireworks have been used to commemorate national celebrations and events of great significance, and assert pride in national identity, such as: Hong Kong by night from 1983; pairings with flags such as the USA's 1987 22c issue; the wonderful celebratory 45c 'Germany United' stamp from 1990 showing a firework display over the Brandenburg Gate.

But they've also been used to mark different kinds of festivals and national events. Uruguay's Christmas stamp set from 1975 included one where the entire design was of the patterns made by fireworks in the sky, and the motif was picked up by Antilles for its 1989



HONG KONG, CHINA 中國香港





Christmas issue, which also included a fireworks stamp, and Uruguay in 2000. New Year celebrations have also been happily depicted on stamp designs and FDCs such as Slovenia's 1999 Christmas and New Year set. Jersey celebrated Prince William's 18th birthday with a stamp featuring fireworks in 2000.

An odder, but appealingly imaginative firework-themed image was part of the 1981 Europa folklore issue; the Liechtenstein stamps included quirky images of disembodied torsos in national costume gazing at an overhead firework display. San Marino's folklore stamps included a bonfire as well as fireworks, which would

fit them into any kind of Bonfire Night thematic collections even if the designer didn't actually have Guy Fawkes' insurrection in mind.

Fireworks are a popular stamp design motif, and even a subject for full sets including Malta's 2000 Fireworks set of five stamps; Macao's 2004 Fireworks Concours and 2008 Fireworks; Netherlands' 2007 Christmas Lottery stamps and a particularly lovely set from Thailand in 2011. Pages dedicated to them in your albums would sit nicely along festival thematic, national celebrations or annual events such as Chinese New Year – which would be fitting as China is the world's biggest producer of fireworks.

What are less in evidence are actual Guy Fawkes Night stamps. But on 4 October 2005, the Royal Mail issued Smilers Sheet BC-076 – The Gunpowder Plot, consisting of strips of First Class 'Union Flag' stamps with se-tenant labels of Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators. It was produced



Most of the non-UK stamps mentioned in this article are available from PostBleed: www.postbleed.com

in a limited edition of 1605, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot – at the time of writing, Jerwood Philatelics had one available for £17.25. A FDC was also issued, bearing a large portrait of Mister Fawkes.

The image on the FDC was used by imontage to make a fake 1st class stamp which can be viewed at <https://www.deviantart.com/imontage/art/Guy-Fawkes-post-stamp-771401956>. Perhaps one day the Royal Mail will give Guy Fawkes a stamp of his own... now that really would cause a bang!



November 5th is Guy Fawkes Night when England traditionally has fireworks as mentioned in the article above. Being English, it is fitting that this article is my final contribution to the OVERPRINT.

GOING OUT WITH A BANG!