

BRITISH LIBRARY

PHILATELIC COLLECTIONS NEWSLETTER

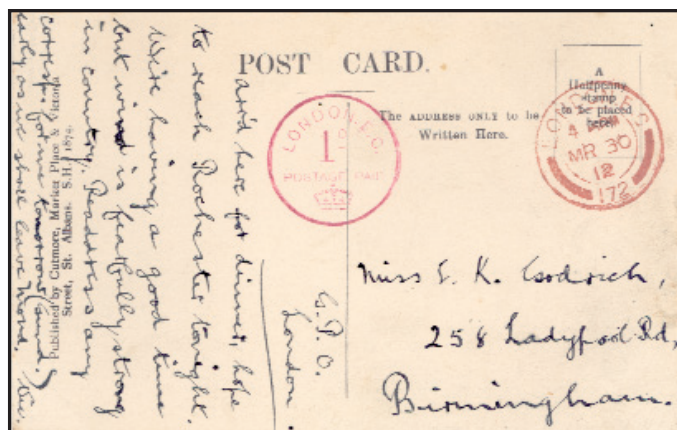


Dr Ron McInroy

Main image:
Great Britain
1912 Wilkinson
"Coin in the slot"
1d impression
on a postcard.

Background image:
Italy 1938 Francotyp
"C" - 1L.25 with
"Bubba" tractor
advertising slogan.

The McInroy Collection



The British Library is fortunate to have been donated the extensive collection of world Meter stamps of Dr Ron McInroy. Formed over a period of thirty-five years, the collection is currently contained in over one hundred boxes.

Meter stamps are the postage impressions that are printed onto mail, by machines that record the amount of postage by means of a meter. The collecting of meter stamps has until recently been a much neglected area, however many philatelists now recognised that they form an integral part of postal history. The subject has been advanced by the publication in 2005 of *The International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog* by Hawkins and Stambaugh.

During January 1912 the first experimental machine in Britain was placed on trial at the London Chief Post Office. This 'penny-in-the-slot' machine was invented by Frederick Wilkinson. Although popular on the first day of use, the mail dropped to about 20 or 30 items per day, and the trial ended in August.

The McInroy collection includes an important group of these marks.

At the Postal Union Congress in Madrid in 1920, the use of Meter mailing was sanctioned for mail going anywhere in the world, this came into effect on 1st January 1922, and was an important step forward.

In U.S.A. the Pitney Postal Machine Co. formed in 1902, and in 1920 became the Pitney Bowes Postage Meter Company. The company went on to play a leading role in the development of Meter mail.

The rivalry to introduce meter marks in Britain was between the Postage Meters and Machines Company (a subsidiary of Pitney Bowes), and Universal Postal Frankers Ltd. The Pitney Bowes machine was first used on the 5th September 1922 at the offices of the Prudential Assurance Company, London. The first Universal NZ machine came into use in October 1922 when it was used for a mailing of *The Philatelic Magazine*.

Although the McInroy Collection encompasses meter stamps of the whole world, the collection mainly focuses on the meter stamps of Great Britain, with examples of most of the different types that were used, and many of the different machine numbers. There are also strong sections of USA, Canada, and New Zealand.

SPONSORED BY



VACCARI s.r.l.

Philately and Books

Via M. Buonarroti, 46 - 41058 Vignola (Modena) Italy
Tel. +39 059 771 251 - 059 764 106 - Fax +39 - 059 760 157
email: info@vaccari.it - internet: www.vaccari.it

PHILATELY AND POSTAL HISTORY • WORLD CLASSIC POSTAGE STAMPS AND COVERS • OLD ITALIAN STATES • RARITIES • PHILATELIC LITERATURE

Issue 11
Spring 2007
ISSN 1364-887X
Editor Paul Skinner

Philatelic Research and the British Library's Patent and Intellectual Property Collections

Originating as the Patent Office Library, the United Kingdom's national collection of patents from around the world is now a part of the British Library's Business & Intellectual Property Centre, and presents some fascinating opportunities for philatelic research. The types of searches that can be conducted include for example: security paper, printing (by process or by printers name), gumming, and perforating machines, cancellation devices, envelopes, postal mechanisation, etc.

There are printed copies of all patents from the beginning in 1617 onwards, although the English patents until 1852 are copied from the originals in the Public Record Office. In that year the three earlier patent systems from England, Ireland and Scotland merged. Since 1855 patents and related material from numerous countries have been collected, and now include over 50 million patent specifications from 40 countries worldwide. Numerous gazettes and supporting literature, as well as an

increasing number of electronic databases, facilitate greater access to the collection.

Perhaps the most immediate and accessible route is to visit the British Library website, where free online access is available to a number of databases

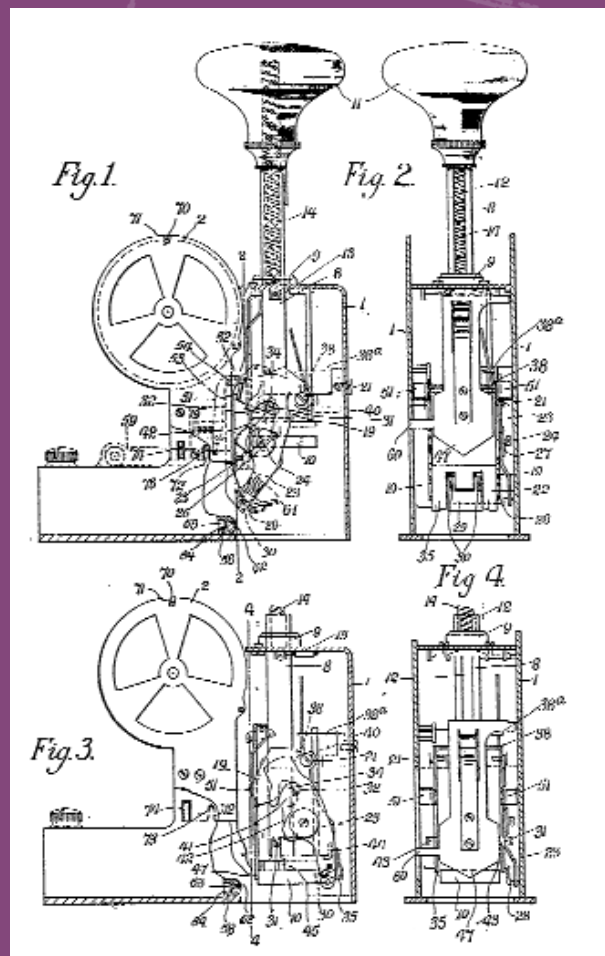


Diagram of the patent document.

of patents, (go to www.bl.uk/collections/patents/keylinks.html). In particular, in a Europe-wide collaboration, the European Patent Office has created Esp@cenet®, which utilises a “worldwide” format to enable searching across a vast amount of data (back to 1895 by name, title or class for Britain, for example). The databases may be searched to identify the patent for a particular invention, to review patents in a particular technical field, or to search for patents filed by known inventors, companies or organisations.

To illustrate the potential, a general search on the Esp@cenet® database by entering “postage” produced 4549 results. A word of caution here, not all of the patents applied for will have ended with a finished product, and those that do reach fruition, may not exactly match the patent specifications.



“Davis's Improved Patent for Affixing Postage Stamps” demonstration label. The Fletcher Collection.

The Fletcher Collection includes a plain stamp sized label inscribed “DAVIS'S IMPROVED PATENT FOR AFFIXING POSTAGE STAMPS”. A search of the database located a patent taken out in 1920, by Davis and “The New International Stamping Machine Company, Limited”.

There are three pages of description and three of diagrams, explaining how the device was intended to be constructed and operated, “... to render the theft of stamps from the machine impossible without detection ... and to ensure a firm adhesion of the stamp upon the surface to which it is applied”. Presumably the label was intended to be used for demonstration purposes, although the Fletcher example has a London cancellation and appears to have been used in place of a postage stamp.

- Other functions of the Business & IP Centre include:
- Collection of Patent publications including official gazettes, trade marks and registered designs.
 - Collection of current market research reports; trade directories; business journals; company annual reports, house journals and trade literature.
 - Law reports and other material on litigation
 - Workshops and events for businesses

Researcher's Note By Harcourt Fuller

Stamp of a Nation: Kwame Nkrumah, 'Nation Building' and the Postage Stamps of Ghana

Last November I went to the British Library as a numismatist and left as an enthusiastic philatelist as well. Thanks to the tremendous philatelic and historical knowledge of David Beech and Paul Skinner, I have now found another source for documenting the process of decolonization and nation-building in the Gold Coast / Ghana.

As Ghana celebrates its 50th anniversary of independence on 6th March 2007, it is timely to reflect on the visual record that symbolized the newfound nationhood in the early years of independence. My current research project considers the centrality of postage stamps (and national money) to the fomentation and consolidation of national identity in nascent nation-states such as Ghana. Postage stamps are an important source for researching the post-colonial relationship between Britain and Ghana, as well as for chronicling the character of Kwame Nkrumah who sought to build the new nation-state in his own image.

As soon as the Gold Coast gained independence from Britain on 6th March 1957, Kwame Nkrumah ordered the printing of Ghanaian postage stamps initially from the British-based Crown Agents. The iconography of these stamps reflected the political ideology of Kwame Nkrumah and advertised his numerous 'nation-building' projects. Whereas the stamps of the Gold Coast colony featured an image of the reigning British Monarch, many Ghanaian stamps issued between independence and the 1966 coup that removed him from power featured the image of Kwame Nkrumah. British officials objected to the printing of Nkrumah's image on Ghanaian stamps, given that between 1957 and 1960 Ghana had Dominion status in the British Commonwealth – and as a matter of protocol - all its currency and stamps were to bear the image of the British monarch. However, Nkrumah felt that the issue of stamps and money bearing his image was an essential expression of national sovereignty and crucial to the consolidation of the identity of the new nation-state.

The foregoing is a synopsis of my preliminary research findings. My next step is to identify research grants to complete the collection and to access relevant archives and other resources in Britain and Ghana to expand this brief article into a full-length, scholarly journal article analysing the significance of postage stamps to Kwame Nkrumah's brand of nationalism and nation building in Ghana.

Harcourt Fuller is a PhD Research Student at the London School of Economics. He is also a Research Assistant in the Department of Coins & Medals at the British Museum, working on the 'Money in Africa' Project.



Harcourt Fuller.



Ghana 1959–61 Nkrumah Statue, Accra.

GHANA

Seeing the Philatelic Collections

Our information leaflet, describing the collections and services, may be obtained on request or viewed on the British Library website www.bl.uk/collections/philatelic

The 'Philatelic Rarities' web page is available at www.collectbritain.co.uk

The Philatelic Exhibition is open free of charge, during the following times

Monday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday 09.30 – 18.00
Tuesday 09.30 – 20.00
Saturday 09.30 – 17.00
Sunday and Bank Holidays
11.00 – 17.00

Researchers may view material not on display, by appointment. A British Library Reader's Pass is required.

The Researcher's Room is available from
Monday 10.00 – 16.00
Tuesday to Friday 09.30 – 16.00

The Library will be closed on the following dates

7 May 2007
(Public Areas open 11.00 – 17.00)
28 May 2007
(Public Areas open 11.00 – 17.00)

27 August 2007
(Public Areas open 11.00 - 17.00)

**Disability Support Officer
For queries about assistance
for readers with disabilities**

T +44 (0)20 7412 7666
F +44 (0)20 7412 7789
Email disability-support-officer@bl.uk

CONTACT POINT

The British Library Philatelic Collections
96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
T +44 (0) 20 7412 7635
F +44 (0) 20 7412 7780
Email philatelic@bl.uk

News Roundup

GREAT BRITAIN NEW DISCOVERY

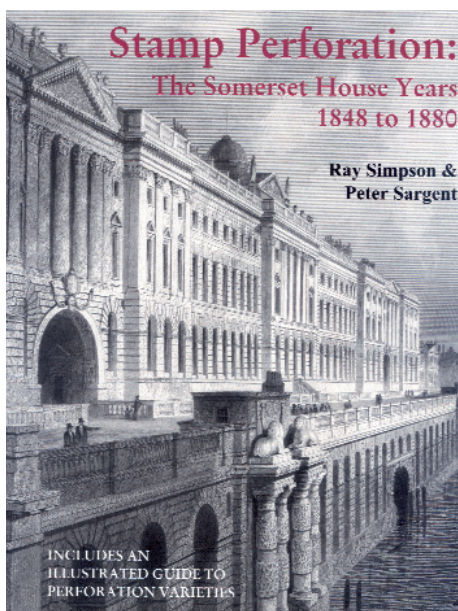
The British Library was recently able to assist in the identification of a newly discovered example of Great Britain abnormal 1862-64 3d plate 3 with white dots.



Great Britain 1862-64 3d plate 3 abnormal.

From a comparison of the black proof sheets of the 3d plates 2 and 3 held in The Board of Inland Revenue Stamping Department Archive, it was possible to determine that the stamp is a genuine example of the abnormal plate 3. This demonstrates the importance of being able to refer to a primary source of information.

For the full story see "A new find of an 1862 3d Rose Abnormal Plate 3", Karl Louis FRPSL, *The GB Journal* volume 45, No.1, January / February, 2007, pp11 and 12. The stamp has subsequently been sold by the auction company Corinphila of Switzerland, for CHF 18,880 (approximately £7800 including premium).



PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Many of the users of the Philatelic Collections are working on books or articles, and amongst those which have recently appeared is:

Stamp Perforations: The Somerset House Years – 1848 to 1880

by Ray Simpson and Peter Sargent, The Royal Philatelic Society London, 2006

WANTED! PHILATELIC EXHIBITION LITERATURE

For a number of years the Library has been collecting literature of National and International Philatelic Exhibitions. Typically this may include a prospectus, a number of bulletins, an exhibition catalogue, a judges report, and a Palmares catalogue. In some instances other literature may also have been issued in connection with the exhibition.

To a large extent this literature has been collected through the kindness and generosity of collectors, commissionaires, or organisers, who have donated items. Once the Library has collected together a full set for an Exhibition, it is bound, and made available to researchers. Unfortunately many sets are only partly complete.

If anybody is able to supply any of this type of material, they are asked to please send a list in the first instance to Philatelic Collections. All submissions will be acknowledged and your help will be most gratefully received.