

PHILATELIC RECORD HANDBOOKS.

No. 3.

THE
Official Stamps

OF
Great Britain. .

BY

I. J. BERNSTEIN.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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THE Proprietors of the *Philatelic Record* wish to thank the Board of Inland Revenue, the Office of Works, the Board of Education, the Board of Trade, and the Crown Agents, for information courteously supplied to Mr. Bernstein, thus enabling them in this, the third of their Series of Handbooks, to include facts, which, to the best of their knowledge, have not hitherto been made public.

MANCHESTER,

May, 1906.

The Official Stamps of Great Britain.

By I. J. Bernstein.

THE idea of having Official stamps or special stamps for the use of the different Government Offices is as old as the idea of pre-paying postage by means of stamps, and simultaneously with the preparation of the first stamp for issue to the public a special stamp was prepared for official use, and is known as the V.R. For some reason or other, although actually printed, these were never put into use, and belong to the category of unissued varieties. As, however, a collection is not considered complete without them and occasional copies have passed through the post, they are included in my notes. Most of the postmarked specimens are trial cancellations; the number which went through the post was infinitesimal, and even they only did so by reason of being mistaken for the ordinary one penny black by the P.O. officials.

The general design is the same as the penny black of 1840, only that the Maltese crosses have been removed from the upper labels on the roller impression and the letters V. and R. substituted. The plate



was prepared exactly as that for the ordinary stamp, even to the inscription in the margin which, you will remember, reads "price 1d. per label, 1s. per row of 12, £1 per sheet." etc. This inscription is curious, considering that the stamps were for Government use only, and never intended to be sold; the attention of the authorities was called to it, but somehow, although a considerable number of sheets were printed, it was never altered.

The paper and colour was identical with the ordinary issue. One plate only was prepared and was lettered A instead of being numbered, and about 5,000 sheets were printed. A quantity were sent out as specimen stamps, without any surcharge, and the bulk—some 3,302 sheets—were destroyed on the 25th of January, 1843; the plate itself was destroyed in 1850.

All official correspondence therefore was prepaid by ordinary stamps, but as these had to be paid for in cash at the post office by the officials, and the authorities only refunded the amount thus spent once a quarter, it was decided in October, 1882, to issue special stamps to be used for official purposes only and which could be obtained simply by requisitioning them. For a very brief period, the exact date of which is unknown, unused official stamps were on sale at Somerset House at

face value. The general public, stamp dealers, and collectors seem to have been absolutely ignorant of this arrangement, as mint copies have always been difficult to procure and have realised very high prices.

The way these stamps were specially prepared was twofold. The ordinary current stamp was either overprinted or perforated in a manner which I will describe as I treat of them.

I do not propose to deal with the stamps as they were issued, but will follow a much simpler plan of dealing with the issues of each department separately. In the first place, therefore, let me give a list of the departments using official stamps in the order in which I propose to take them.

Inland Revenue.
 Government Parcels.
 Office of Works.
 War Office.
 Board of Education.
 Admiralty.
 Royal Household.
 Board of Trade.

Inland Revenue.

These stamps were issued to the Inland Revenue officials in the provinces for franking all correspondence excepting that to London. Letters to and from the head office passed free. London only used stamps on foreign letters, as such could not be franked except by means of postage stamps. The stamps were overprinted in sans serif capitals varying in size according to the size of the stamp overprinted.

The first issue consisted of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green, 1880, light and dark shade; 1d. lilac, sixteen dots; 6d. grey, Plate 18. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d. was issued on the 28th October, 1882, and was used up to May, 1885. The variation in shade follows that of the ordinary $\frac{1}{2}$ d., showing that several printings were made. The 1d. was issued on the 27th September, 1882. Although at this date the 1d. with fourteen dots were still on sale at some post offices none were on hand at Somerset House and the overprint was only applied to the sixteen-dot variety. This stamp is by far the commonest of all the officials, remaining in use for twenty years. During this period no doubt many electros for the surcharge were used and we find at least three distinct thicknesses of type, ranging from a very thin at first to a bold thick type in the later issues. The shades



of lilac vary as they did in the ordinary stamp, and every control letter from A to X (excepting probably the error N/O) can be found. A complete set of these controls would form a very valuable addition to a collection.

6d. grey, Plate 18, was issued overprinted on the 30th November, 1882, and remained in use until 1902. The ordinary stamp was superseded by the 6d. lilac surcharged 6d. in red in 1883 and the stock in hand of the grey instead of being destroyed was used up for these officials: hence we find here the only instance of an ordinary stamp being rarer than the same stamp surcharged for official purposes. Such a large stock was made that it was not exhausted even in July, 1901, when the 6d. Jubilee was issued overprinted. This change was rendered necessary by the proclamation in the *London Gazette* of April 19th, 1901, demonetizing the stamps issued prior to the Jubilee issue. The stock on hand of the 6d. grey I.R. official was then destroyed.

On March 12th, 1885, the current 2½d., namely, the 2½d. lilac of 1884, was overprinted, no doubt for foreign correspondence. At the same time were also issued the following:—

1s., 1884.
 5s., on bleuté.
 10s., „
 £1, wmk. three crowns.

These three last high values are of very great rarity, as they were but seldom employed on letters; the majority of them being used in the prepayment of letters or circulars in bulk in the following manner:—The circulars were made up into bundles of say sixty 1d. ones or 120 ½d. or multiples thereof and, instead of each one bearing a 1d. or ½d. stamp, a stamp of the value corresponding to the total postage of the bundle was affixed to a form which was handed over a post office counter with the circulars. The circulars were then stamped “Paid”; the stamp on the form was cancelled and sent into the Accounts Branch and afterwards destroyed, as are the telegraph forms. That all were not so treated we know, but the officials evidently were not cognisant of the monetary value of these stamps until some years later, as the leakages of these high values at first occurred in but isolated instances. Later on the high values in use came out in much larger numbers, but the supervision even then must have been fairly stringent, as none of the values over 1s. of the Inland Revenue officials are by any means common. Edinburgh and Glasgow seem to have been the worst offenders, as most of them, as also the £5 telegraphically used, bear the postmarks of these towns.

About 1886 to 1887 the bleuté of the ordinary 5s. and 10s. stamps became fainter and finally disappeared, the stamps being printed on pure white paper. These in course of time received the official surcharge, but as this change was one of which the authorities made no record it is impossible to give the date of the issue of the official stamps on white paper.

When the stock of ½d. was exhausted in May, 1885, a fresh supply was overprinted on the then current stamps, the ½d. of 1884, the colour having been changed in that year to slate. These lasted till January, 1888, and the ½d. stamp having again in the meantime been altered the fresh supply issued on this date came out on the new stamp, the vermilion-red, the overprint remaining the same. All controls from A to Q are found.

In 1888 the error of printing the £1 lilac-brown on the fiscal paper, watermark three orbs, instead of on the ordinary paper, watermark three crowns, was made and some of these were overprinted I.R. and issued in 1890. Curiously enough the £1 crowns I.R. is rarer than the £1 orbs, whilst the reverse is the case in the ordinary stamps. This endorses somewhat my suggestion that the P.O. officials gradually acquired philatelic knowledge. At the same time, this stamp together with the £1 crowns and the 10s. and 5s. on bleuté are probably the rarest of the officials. "Specimen" stamps of the two £1's quite recently brought £6 10s. each at auction.

The design of the 1s. having been altered in 1887 the new stamp was adopted for the officials on the 15th March, 1889, and on this stamp we find two distinct thicknesses of overprint. One can also find the L of official with the tailpiece broken, and this constitutes the first minor variety.

The 2½d. I.R. was also brought into conformity with the ordinary current set on the 20th October, 1891, by the adaptation of the lilac on blue Jubilee stamp.

The £1 was altered from lilac-brown to green in 1891; the change of colour in the official stamp followed suit on the 15th April, 1892. An interesting variety is found on this stamp. The second stamp of the second row, corner letters BB, has only one full stop instead of two in the letters I.R.

From this date, 1892 until 1900, no change occurred. In the latter part of 1900 the ½d. stamp, to conform with the regulations of the postal union, was again changed to blue-green, and the official stamp in this colour made its appearance.

In July, 1901, the 6d. Jubilee issue was issued overprinted. On this stamp the minor variety of broken tail-piece to L is found. In



November, 1901, the stock of the 1s. value being exhausted, a temporary supply of the 1s. red and green, then in use, was made. I say temporary supply because the plates for the King's head stamp of this value being in preparation, 2,400 only were printed.

In February, 1902, the ½d., 1d. and 2½d. King's head came into use as officials, and in May, 1902, the 1s., 5s., 10s. and £1.

The criminal proceedings, instituted by the Government in June, 1903, against three persons for stealing and receiving Government stamps, acted as a very salutary warning to all officials. The fear of being involved in this prosecution, and the increased stringency of the supervision, effectually stopped from that date any leakages, and consequently the 5s., 10s. and £1 King I.R. official are practically unprocurable. The authorities, too, adopted a further safeguard. All

stamps on forms, telegraph or otherwise, that were returned to be destroyed, were defaced beyond redemption by passing an ink roller over them.



In the 1904 catalogues, mention was made of the 6d. King stamp overprinted I.R. official. His Royal Highness, however, in the paper he read before the Philatelic Society, London, on the 4th March, 1904, distinctly states and goes out of his way to emphasize the fact that this stamp had not then been issued or made. On the 12th May an order was promulgated stopping the use of all officials, and instructions given that all in stock should be sent to London to be destroyed. It was therefore assumed that this stamp was never printed or used, but I am able to illustrate an undoubtedly genuine copy that passed through the post. His Royal Highness' paper must



have been written some time before he read it, as the Warrant for the printing of these stamps was issued on February 18th, 1904, and the stock delivered on the 10th of March. That this stamp was never issued for *general* use is evidenced by the fact that only three copies are known and they all bear the postmark of May 14th, 1904—the day on which all the stock of official stamps were destroyed.

REFERENCE LIST.

27th Sept., 1882	...	1d. (1882)	...	lilac.
28th Oct., 1882	...	½d. (1880)	...	green.
30th Nov., 1882	...	6d. (1882)	...	grey. Plate 18.
12th Mar., 1885	...	1s. (1884)	...	green.
"	"	...	5s. (1884)	rose on bleuté.
"	"	...	10s. (1884)	blue "
"	"	...	£1 (1884)	wmk. three crowns.
"	1887	...	5s. (1884)	rose on white paper.
"	"	...	10s. (1884)	blue " "
January,	1888	...	½d. (1887)	vermilion.
15th Mar.,	1889	...	1s. (1887)	green.
"	1890	...	£1 (1888)	wmk. three orbs.
20th Oct.,	1891	...	2½d. (1887)	lilac on blue.

15th April, 1892	...	£1 (1891)	...	green.		
		1900	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. (1900)	...	blue-green.
July,		1901	...	6d. (1887)	...	lilac on rose.
November,		1901	...	1s. (1900)	...	green and carmine.
February,		1902	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.	...	green, King's Head.
"	"		...	1d.	...	carmine, ..
"	"		...	$2\frac{1}{2}$ d.	...	blue, ..
May,		1902	...	1s.	...	green and carm. ..
"	"		...	5s.	...	carmine, ..
"	"		...	10s.	...	blue, ..
"	"		...	£1	...	green, ..
14th May,		1904	...	6d.	...	lilac, ..

Government Parcels.

I have for convenience styled the stamps that come under this heading a department, but as a matter of fact they were issued to all departments, even the head office, for prepaying official parcels. The reason for this is found in the Act of Parliament establishing the Parcels Post. Letters are sent over the various railway systems by contract, but owing either to the tremendous Parliamentary power held by the railways, or to the superior intelligence of those controlling their business arrangements, the Act of Parliament provided that the Post Office should pay them 55 per cent. of the actual postage paid on each parcel and not pay for the bulk by weight. By this arrangement the railway company scored heavily. A register is kept of all parcels sent out and the amount paid thereon and this is open to the inspection of the railway officials. Hence if a parcel were simply marked "officially paid," irrespective of amount as was done in the case of letters, the amount due to the companies could not be determined. To avoid payment where possible it was directed that all official parcels up to 3lbs. should be sent by letter post and therefore free. Consequently the parcels post rate being 9d. for over 3 and under 5lbs., and 1s. for over 5 and under 7lbs. only two stamps were required.

It had been evidently the intention of the authorities to issue a distinct stamp, using what is called the unappropriated die for this purpose. I am able to illustrate an essay with the word "Government parcel" in manuscript on the label prepared to receive the words denoting the specific use to which these stamps were to be put.



The idea fell through and overprinting the postage stamps in black either at the top, bottom or centre, according to the design, was

resorted to. I illustrate three essays, the type of overprint on the third stamp being the one adopted.



The 1s. orange-brown was prepared in July, 1883. Both Plates 13 and 14 were in use at the time, and both received the surcharge, but Plate 13 evidently in much larger quantities than 14, as the latter is considerably the rarer of the two. The trial printing that was made in the new larger type had a big fullstop after the word "parcels," but as it gave the overprint a heavy appearance was never issued and is consequently only found unused and on Plate 14.



TRIAL PRINT.



ISSUED STAMP.

Surcharged Govt. Parcels, the 1s., Plates 13 and 14, were issued together with the 9d. green, a value that was revived for Parcels Post purposes on the 1st of August, 1883. In 1886 the rate having been simplified by charging 1½d. for every pound instead of 3d. for every 2lbs. after the first, the 1½d. lilac and 6d. green of the unified series received the overprint and were issued on the 30th April, 1886. As in the case of the I.R.'s, the then current stamp was always overprinted as the stock became exhausted, and thus we find the—

1½d. bi-coloured Jubilee issue appeared on 29th October, 1887.

6d. " " " 19th December, 1887.

9d. " " " 21st August, 1888.

1s. green Jubilee issue appeared on 25th March, 1890.

On the 24th October, 1891, the 2d. of this series received the overprint, the primary reason for which was to pay the registration fee. It was, until the scale of charges was reduced in 1897 from 1½d. to 1d. for the second pound, a fairly rare stamp, but as it then came in very useful for parcels over 1lb. it has since become one of the commonest.

In September, 1892, the 4½d. stamp was issued to the public chiefly for the prepayment of parcels weighing 2lbs., and was simultaneously overprinted for Government parcel purposes. The afore-mentioned change in the rate, which occurred in 1897, naturally necessitated the preparation of 1d. Government parcel stamp, and the 1d. lilac overprinted Govt. Parcels made its appearance in the autumn of that year. Probably the earliest control letter that can be found is T. On this stamp an error occurs, the surcharge being

inverted. One of our foremost philatelic writers has declared this to be unparalleled in the history of the stamps of this country. Since that has been written, an exactly similar error has been made on another stamp of this series, namely, the next stamp that came to be overprinted, the 1s. red and green which superseded the 1s. green in November, 1900. I need hardly say that both are exceedingly rare, especially the latter! Minor varieties occur. Nearly all preceding stamps can be found with the dot under the T of Govt., either to the left or to the right, or altogether omitted; an inverted L in place of T (this is probably due to an arm of the T being broken off); the downstroke of the T and the dot joined spoiling the symmetry; a small P in the word parcels and inverted S in the same word. I mention these here because they, with the exception of the inverted S on the 9d. value, do not seem to occur on the King's head issue which now follow.

These were issued as occasion arose:—6d., Feb., 1902; 2d., May, 1903; 9d., September, 1902; 1d., November, 1902; and 1s., December, 1902; and all remained in use until the 12th of May, 1904.

The 1½d. being no longer useful for Parcels Post purposes was not overprinted; the 4½d. stamp of course, had been entirely discarded.

A most curious thing to note in these stamps is the fact that although from its inception 3d. had been the common factor in the Parcels Post rates, a 3d. stamp overprinted Govt. parcels was never issued, although to the ordinary man it would seem to have been almost a necessity. The reason is, I think, found in the explanation already given that parcels up to 3lbs. in weight were from the outset sent as letters, and possibly all small parcels up to 1lb. in weight are still so sent.

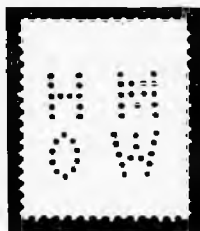
REFERENCE LIST.

1st August, 1883	... 9d. (1883)	... green.
" "	... 1s. (1881)	... orange-brown. Plate 13.
" "	...	... " " " 14.
30th April, 1886	... 1½d. (1884)	... lilac.
" "	... 6d. (1884)	... green.
29th Oct., 1887	... 1½d. (1887)	... purple and green.
19th Dec., 1887	... 6d. (1887)	... lilac on rose.
21st Aug., 1888	... 9d. (1887)	... purple and blue.
25th Mar., 1890	... 1s. (1887)	... green.
24th Oct., 1891	... 2d. (1887)	... green and carmine.
September, 1892	... 4½d. (1892)	... green and scarlet.
1897	... 1d. (1882)	... lilac.
November, 1900	... 1s. (1900)	... green and carmine.
February, 1902	... 6d. ...	... lilac, King's Head.
May, 1902	... 2d. ...	... green and carm., ..
September, 1902	... 9d. ...	... purple and blue, ..
November, 1902	... 1d. ...	... carmine, ..
December, 1902	... 1s. ...	... green and carm., ..

Office of Works.

Stamps for this Department were issued to the Assistant Surveyors of Works in the provinces. There are only six such officials, who are

stationed at Liverpool (with sub-office in Manchester), Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol, Southampton, Edinburgh and Glasgow. They are engaged in the erection and maintenance of all Government buildings, such as Post Offices, Courts of Justice, Revenue and Customs Offices, etc., in their district. Their business is very limited, consequently these stamps are very much rarer than most other official stamps. Letters to and from London passed free. The stamps issued consisted of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. values only, and unlike the ones so far dealt with, they were at first not overprinted, but were perforated with the letters H.M.O.W. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion and 1d. lilac were so issued in August, 1895, but only in very small numbers. Of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d., only 2,400 were prepared, and of the 1d. value, 3,600. This supply was exhausted by October, 1895, and another 2,400 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion, and 3,600 1d. lilac, were issued. The perforation, however, was altered to the letters O.W., surmounted by a crown. This type of perforation has been chronicled, but the first issue seems to have been entirely overlooked. The stock of these stamps being exhausted, a new issue of stamps was made on the 12th March, 1896, and consisted of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion and 1d. lilac, surcharged in black O.W. Official in the usual manner. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d. continued



in use until 1901, when the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green superseded the vermilion for this Department. Of this stamp, according to His Royal Highness, only 6,000 were printed; it was replaced by the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. King's Head in February, 1902, when also the 1d. Queen gave way to the 1d. King's Head. In May, 1902, the 5d. and 10d. Jubilee and the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. King's Head were overprinted, and were used only by the head office on their foreign correspondence. I may explain here that a Clerk of Works is stationed at all the principal Embassies on the Continent and elsewhere for the purpose of looking after the upkeep of the buildings which are the property of the Crown; hence the necessity for stamps for foreign letters.

Of the 5d., 12,000 were printed, viz., 50 sheets of 240 stamps, and of the 10d., 800, viz., 10 sheets of 80 stamps, but I cannot help thinking a mistake was made in overprinting so many of the 5d. value, which seems out of all proportion to the reasonable requirements of the Department.

I am officially informed that only 949 of the 5d. were used and 480 of the 10d., and that of the latter this was the total number issued to the Department by the Inland Revenue Authorities.

The 2d. stamp King's Head was issued on the same date and was for the registration fee on important documents and remittances from head office only. A circular with an official appearance was sent from headquarters to all provincial Officers of Works directing that all these stamps were to be returned to a certain high official in London.

The fact that these used stamps appeared in big quantities in the Strand afterwards shows that the circular was not by any means official. The 10d. Queen's Head was superseded by the King's Head stamp of this denomination in June, 1903. Fifteen sheets of 96 stamps were overprinted, but of these only 240 were issued to the Department, of which 134 were used, the balance being returned to be destroyed. The 5d. King's Head, though chronicled, was neither issued nor prepared.

REFERENCE LIST.

DATE.			
Aug., 1895 ...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion (1887)	...	Perforated H.M.O.W.
" " ...	1d. lilac (1882)	...	" " "
Oct., 1895 ...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion (1887)	...	" " Crown O.W.
" " ...	1d. lilac (1882)	...	" " "
12th Mar., 1896	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion (1887)	...	Overprinted O.W. Official.
" " ...	1d. lilac (1882)	...	" " "
" " 1901	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue-green (1900)	...	" " "
Feb., 1902 ...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. green, King's Head	..	" " "
" " ...	1d. carmine,	..	" " "
May, 1902 ...	2d. green and red,	..	" " "
" " ...	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue,	..	" " "
" " ...	5d. lilac and blue (1887)	...	" " "
" " ...	10d. lilac and carmine (1890)	..	" " "
June, 1903 ...	10d. carmine and lilac, King's Head	..	" " "

War Office.

For this Department three values were overprinted Army Official in September, 1896, and were distributed to the District and Station Paymaster's Offices. Here, again, the head office sent and received letters free. The stamps overprinted were the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion, the 1d. lilac, and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. lilac on blue—all then current.

In the early printings one electro must have been used for surcharging both the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. values, as we have the same variety of overprint occurring on the seventh stamp on the third horizontal row of the lower half of the sheet. The word "Official" reads "Official" on both values. The eighth stamp of the fourth row has the foot of the L broken. Both of these varieties are catalogued. Why the broken L should be catalogued in this section and ignored in the I.R.'s is something that even the compilers of the catalogue would find difficult of explanation. These two defects were remedied later, but in such a manner as to constitute a fresh variety, the L with a long thick horizontal stroke, as the foot which was added to complete the letter was thicker and longer than on any of the other stamps. The control letters of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. range probably from L to Q and of the 1d. from T to X.



After the first printing, which was in medium type, a fresh electro evidently was made for the 1d., as it appears in a very thin type, to be changed again to a thicker one later. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d., however, always remained medium. For the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a very much thicker type was employed and the words were placed closer together; this was rendered necessary no doubt by the dark colour of the stamp—a surcharge such as was employed on the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. would not have been legible on the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. Only the first printing of this stamp, that of September 1st, 1896, was made by overprinting the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. without the Jubilee line. This line was added to the ordinary stamp towards the end of the same year, and all subsequent printings of Army Official have it.

In 1900 the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green was used to replace the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion. In November, 1901, the 6d. Jubilee was added to the series and received a similar overprint to the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.

In February, 1902, the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. King's Head replaced the same denominations of Queen's, and in August of the same year the 6d. King's made its appearance. All three of these stamps were overprinted in tall sans serif capitals; the necessity for employing thick heavy type no longer existed. The $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. value had been already discarded for some time, and was never issued on the King's Head.

In April, 1903, a fresh electro was made and used on the 6d. value only. It is mentioned by Stanley Gibbons' *Monthly Journal* for June, 1904, and therein described; a note is added that if genuine it is undoubtedly a second type. Somehow or other, although there is now no question as to the genuineness of the surcharge, they do not yet catalogue it. It is, I may mention, a great rarity. Also I am officially informed that 2,000 sheets of 240 stamps were overprinted. The fact that the variety was not discovered until 1904, and its rarity, leads me to suppose that nearly all the stamps of the second type were amongst those that were returned to be destroyed. You will observe from the illustration that the word Army has been entirely altered—the cross-stroke of the A is lower down than in the first type, the R is more open, the middle part of the M only comes half-way down, and the Y is also more open.



FIRST TYPE.



SECOND TYPE.

Amongst the stamps of the first type of surcharge there are innumerable minor varieties; but as they occur with regularity on a number of values, and are due to badly shaped letters and are not of accidental origin, I enumerate a few of the principal ones.

In the word Army we find the left leg of the A is longer than the other on the fourth stamp of the fourteenth row of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. vermilion, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green, and 1d. lilac, as well as the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. King's Head; the short Y occurs on the eleventh stamp on the tenth row, the splayed Y on the third stamp of the second row of all the same values; a small rectangular stop joining the bottom of the down-stroke to R occurs on the second stamp in the fifth row of both the $\frac{1}{2}$ d.'s and the 1d. Queen; the

broad open top of the Y occurs on the 2½d. and 6d. Queen only, and shows that for the ½d., 1d. Queen's. and ½d., 1d., and 6d. King's the same electros were used, and for the 2½d. and 6d. Queen's another.

ARMY ARMY ARMY ARMY

In the word "Official" the first I is shorter on the fifth stamp in the seventh row on the ½d. vermilion, ¾d. green, and 1d. lilac—the stamp in the corresponding position on the King's Heads shows plain signs of it having been mended. A variety that occurs on all the stamps with the medium surcharge (¾d.'s and 1d. Queen's and all the King's) is the elongated I (longer at foot)—this is the fifth stamp on the seventh row; the tall L occurs, too, on the second stamp in the tenth row on the same values. The most interesting variety is on the last

OFFICIAL OFFICIAL OFFICIAL

stamp but one in the bottom row of the sheet (the stamp immediately above the control letter) on the ¾d. green, 1d. lilac (Control X), ½d., 1d., and 6d. King: the top horizontal stroke of the second F in Official is very much longer than that of its neighbour or that on any other



B

stamp. I am unable to say whether this variety occurs on the 6d. King's Head, Type II., but as, no doubt, the word "Official" as well as the word "Army" would be reset, it probably does not. I have never seen this stamp unused or in greater quantities than a pair, so cannot speak with any degree of certainty. On the ½d. and 1d. King's Head, Controls A and B are to be found.

Other broken letters are caused by the discs punched out by the perforating machine, or other foreign matter, interfering with the surcharge; we find from this cause the O reading like C and the R like P, besides innumerable broken letters of one kind or another.

REFERENCE LIST.

September, 1896	...	½d. (1887)	...	vermilion.
"	"	1d. (1882)	...	lilac.
"	"	2½d. (1887)	...	lilac on blue.
	1900	¾d. (1900)	...	blue-green.
November, 1901	..	6d. (1887)	...	lilac on red.
February, 1902	...	¾d. ...	...	green, King's Head.
"	"	1d. ...	...	carmine, ..
August, 1902	...	6d. Type I.	...	purple, ..
January, 1904	...	6d. Type II.	...	" ..

Board of Education.

In February, 1902, additions to the number of the Departments using official stamps were made, and the Board of Education issued for the use of their inspectors in provincial centres a series of five stamps, consisting of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. King's Head, 5d. Jubilee series, and 1s. red and green Queen's Head, overprinted in black in three lines with the words Board of Education.

According to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales the number actually printed of the 5d. was 60,000 and of the 1s. 30,000. This large number was the result of some misunderstanding, and 55,200 of the 5d. and 28,000 of the 1s. were returned to be destroyed, leaving the number actually issued 4,800 5d. and 2,000 1s.

The 1s. of the King's Head type was overprinted and delivered on December 23rd, 1902, but was never issued to the inspectors. A few copies may have been used, probably by some high official, but the majority perished in the general bonfire on May 14th, 1904. The stock of 1s. red and green (Queen) had in many instances not been used up.

The 5d. King's Head was ready in February, 1904; but very few of these had been issued and used before they, too, shared the common fate.

REFERENCE LIST.

February, 1902	...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. green, King's Head.
"	"	...	1d. carmine, ..
"	"	...	$2\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue, ..
"	"	...	5d. lilac and blue (1887).
"	"	...	1s. red and green (1900).
May, 1904...	...	...	5d. lilac and blue, King's Head.
"	"	...	1s. red and green, ..

Admiralty.

Towards the end of 1902 it was rumoured that at the beginning of the following financial year (April 1st, 1903), stamps overprinted On H.M.S. would be issued by the Admiralty to the Accountant Officer on ships in commission: this proved to be rather an inaccurate anticipation of a forthcoming event. In March, 1903, however, a set of the six stamps from the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 3d. was issued to the provincial centres of the Admiralty Department, and consisted of the current stamps overprinted in black Admiralty Official.

The electro employed, however, soon proved defective, and a new one was made in the autumn of the same year. In this, the letters of the word Admiralty were all made narrower, thus, whilst retaining the same length of the word, giving a space between each letter and making the word altogether more legible. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d. appeared in the second type in September, 1903, the 1d. in November, the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 3d. in February, 1904, and the 2d. and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. in March, and as they, too, were withdrawn and destroyed in May of that year they are by reason of a short life rare.

This Department is the only one that has used postal stationery marked distinctively by overprinting with the name of the Department, and thus issued we find the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. King's Head postcard, dark green,

surcharged in black over the stamp, and the 3d. King's Head brown registered envelope surcharged in blue in large type on the flap underneath the stamp. The size of the envelope was H2. The Department also used a series of six forms with both types of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. wrapper stamp of the Queen printed in lilac-rose. These were not overprinted, but can be distinguished from ordinary wrapper stamps by their colour and the colour of the paper on which they are printed, of which I have different kinds, viz., lilac-rose on white, blue, yellow, dark and pale green, pink, and crimson.

REFERENCE LIST.

March,	1903	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. green	Overprinted with Type I.
"	"	...	1d. carmine	" " "
"	"	...	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. lilac and green	" " "
"	"	...	2d. green and red	" " "
"	"	...	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue	" " "
"	"	...	3d. brown on yellow	" " "
September,	1903	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. green	" " Type II.
November,	1903	...	1d. carmine	" " "
February,	1904	...	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. lilac and green	" " "
"	"	...	3d. brown on yellow	" " "
March,	1904	...	2d. green and red	" " "
"	"	...	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue	" " "

Royal Household.

In February, 1902, two stamps, the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. King's Head were overprinted R.H. Official and distributed to the heads of the Household at the various Palaces of the King for use on business correspondence, the letters of His Majesty passing free as hitherto. The 1d. was issued in February, and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in May, 1902, and their use was discontinued in May, 1904.

February, 1902	...	1d. carmine, King's Head.
May, 1902	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. green, "

Board of Trade.

This Department has used official stamps longer than any other, the first issue being made as far back as the 27th January, 1881. As, however, the stamps were perforated instead of being overprinted no chronicle has been made of their issue, and they have not even been catalogued by the English catalogue makers. Senf mentions them, and Kohl catalogues some of them. Their official character is denoted by the letters B. T. surmounted by a crown: as already mentioned, the device is perforated through the stamp current at the time of issue. There seems to be two types, one with a full stop between the B and T and one without. The earliest stamps found are the 1s. orange-brown (Plate 13), and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue (Plate 21), and no doubt all stamps from the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1s. values in use between the years 1881 to 1904 exist. This is only surmise, and I can only give such information as I have gleaned from the stamps themselves. The authorities do

not record such small details as a change in design or colour, and when, as in a case like this, the Philatelic Press does not chronicle these particulars, it is most difficult in after years to be absolutely certain.



These stamps are always found with the design perforated *tête-bêche* in vertical pairs, thus showing that not more than a row of twelve perforating devices, possibly only one was used, two or more rows being perforated simultaneously.

Unlike the other officials, these do not seem to have been issued to the provincial centres, but were originally used like the high value O. W. stamps for franking letters to foreign parts, hence their rarity.

Of the King's Head stamps, however, I have seen some that were evidently used on parcels.

The use of these stamps was abandoned, together with the other official stamps, on the 14th May, 1904, thus clearly settling any question as to their official character.

The stamps known to me are—

REFERENCE LIST.

- 1s. orange-brown, Plate 13.
- 2½d. blue, Plate 21.
- ½d. slate.
- 1d. lilac, sixteen dots.
- 2½d. lilac.
- ½d. vermilion.
- 1½d. to 1s. Jubilee.
- ½d. green (1900).
- 1s. red and green (1900).
- ½d. to 1s. King's Head.

In 1903 it was announced by some stamp journals that the Crown Agents for the Colonies had joined the ranks of Departments using official stamps by issuing the 1d. King's Head overprinted C.A. This overprint, however, is not official and is merely applied by their printers, and the stamps used for bills or receipts. The 6d. lilac is likewise overprinted and used on Agreement forms by this Department. The stamps are not employed for postage.

In conclusion, let me add a general note of warning. Forgeries of the overprinted stamps exist galore, both used and unused, and they vary from clumsy, crude caricatures of the original to such perfect imitations as to defy detection.

