



#### The Telegraph Stamp

A SET of four values, 1d. 3d., 1s. and 5s. stamps was issued on February 1st., 1876 for use on telegrams. The reason for this issue was that the Post Office had no way of distinguishing between revenue from postal services and revenue from the telegraph service, which had been taken over from the private telegraph companies on February 4th, 1870. Critics of the Government were asking whether the £5½ million paid in compensation to these companies had been justified by the increase in Post Office revenue.

Additional values to this set of Telegraph stamps became necessary owing to the varying rates—up to £1.5s. a word to Peru—and the 4d., 6d., 3s., 10s., £1 and £5 values were issued on March 1st, 1877. This article deals only with the £5 stamp, first as a Telegraph stamp, and from March 21st, 1882 as a Postage stamp, the word "TELEGRAPHS" having been drilled out of the plate and the word "POSTAGE" inserted in its place, the spaces either end being filled in with "ornaments".

#### The Postage Stamp

The £5 Postage stamp had a life of 21 years, till 1902, and indeed, could still be bought in a few London Post Offices in the 1920s. It was printed on paper watermarked Double Anchor, not the Multiple Shamrocks of the Telegraph £5. The usage was for high value telegrams and for accounting purposes between Telegraph and Money Order Offices and the Accounts Branch of the G.P.O. It was extensively used in Glasgow and Edinburgh between 1894 and 1896, and in Belfast from 1888 to 1895, probably as a form of receipt for payment of Excise Duty by distilleries in Scotland and Northern Ireland, in the same sort of way as the 10s. and £1 K.E VII stamps were used to prepay duty on tobacco from Guernsey. I very much doubt whether the £5 stamp was ever used for postage (as was the New Guinea £5 stamp, which in the 1930s franked registered parcels of bullion by airmail to Australia).

#### Printing, Sales and Auction Realisations

The total number of £5 Telegraph stamps printed was 1,500 sheets, or 84,000 stamps, and there is no record of the number returned for destruction when Telegraph stamps were invalidated in 1881. The Telegraph stamp is much rarer, both unused and used, than the £5 Postage stamp, which had a printing of 4,407 sheets, or 246,826 stamps, during its life of 21 years.

I list on page 481 the number of stamps sold in each year from 1882 to 1897. I have also listed by each year from 1877

## The Five Pound Stamp of G.B., and its Usage

By Comdr. M. S. L. Burnett

to 1905 the 641 copies which are the raw material on which this article is based. These 641 £5 stamp photographs have been taken from Auction catalogues issued between 1937 and 1973. During those 24 years the Auction realisations have moved progressively upwards, as follows:

1937-1943, £4-£10	Average of 10 lots.
1944-1959, £12-£20	" " 170 "
1960-1968, £23-£48	" " 84 "
1969-1973, £69-£73	" " 63 "

#### The Rectangular Boxed Cancels

Between 1878 and 1892 some of the £5 stamps have a rectangular, boxed cancel, in addition to the circular date-stamp. This contains the initial letters of the Accounts Branch at the G.P.O. which received the stamp in payment from the Telegraph Office which applied the circular date-stamp. This defacement, not popular with collectors, affects 49 of the 205 stamps dated during these 14 years.

The four types found on the £5 stamp are illustrated (B1 to B4), and were used as follows:

**Type B1:** T.M.B./G.P.O.; Telegraph Message Branch/General Post Office.

I have examined nine examples, dated between JA 22 78 JU 23 85. All have the c.d.s. of a London Office:

PARLIAMENT ST. S.W.  
 CORNHILL B.O. E.C.  
 LONDON WESTERN OFFICE (3)  
 LONDON CLEARING HOUSE BRANCH  
 ST MARTIN'S LE GRAND. E.C.  
 WEST STRAND B.O. W.C. (2)  
 HEALTH EXHIBITION. S.W.

**Type B2:** C.H.B./G.P.O.: Clearing House Branch, General Post Office.

Of this type, 30 examples are dated between JY 18 82 and SP 18 91. Ten of these have the c.d.s. of a London Office:

VERE ST. B.O. S.W.  
 UPPER THAMES ST. E.C.  
 HIGH HOLBORN D.O. W.C.  
 HIGH RD. Knightsbridge. S.W.  
 NOTTING HILL WEST HIGH ST.  
 LONDON. N.  
 LONDON. N.W.  
 LONDON. S.W.  
 LONDON NORTH WEST CENTRAL OFFICE.  
 GLOUCESTER RD. NR. HEREFORD SQ. S.W.

Of this type, 10 of them originate in the Midlands:

MANCHESTER TELEGRAPHS (2), BIRMINGHAM (4), LEEDS (2), SHEFFIELD, LIVERPOOL. (Continued on page 475)

T. M. B.  
G. P. O.

Type B1

C. H. B.  
G. P. O.

Type B2

P. A. B.  
R. & A. G. O.

Type B3

**Usage of the £5 G.B. (continued from page 473)**

A further 10 of them are date-stamped at, or near, the coast, and I can find no theory to explain this:

VENTNOR, FOLKESTONE, PORTSMOUTH, PLYMOUTH, TIVERTON, PORTMADOC, BATH, WEST HARTLEPOOL, LANGPORT, BIDEFORD.

Type B3: P.A.B./R. & A.G.O. Pay & Accounts Branch/— ? —.

The three examples of this boxed initials are dated between DE 1 86 and JU 15 88 and all have the BIRMINGHAM c.d.s.



Type B4

Type B4: T.A.B./EDINR. Telegraph Accounts Branch/EDINBURGH.

Three examples of this boxed initials hand-stamp, dated between NO 29 83 and NO 28 89, are date-stamped Blackhall St. GREENOCK, PAISLEY and GLASGOW.

Six of the boxes seen had initials which were indecipherable.

**The " Whisky " Stamps**

A total of 239 stamps was studied with date-stamps between 1893 and 1896, and over 80% of them were cancelled in Glasgow, Edinburgh or Belfast:—

Type A1 Glasgow,	1894-1896	157
Type A2/3 Edinburgh,	1895-1896	36
Type A4 Belfast,	1885-1895	81

Total 274

These I call " Whisky " stamps for the reasons set out below.

Most of the Belfast stamps had additional red or blue crayon lines defacing the stamps, and efforts to rub these out have in many cases ruined the stamps. Glasgow and Edinburgh stamps have suffered in the same way, but to a lesser extent.



Type A1



Type A2



Type A3



Type A4

Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast were the Headquarters in Scotland and Ireland of the Inland Revenue and Excise Offices, and my theory in regard to these stamps' usage is as follows:

Excise Duty on spirits was payable by the distillery companies in Scotland and Ireland at the Excise Offices, and a receipt for the amount paid carried stamps to the value of the amount paid. The stamps were affixed to the Company's books, and cancelled with the circular date-stamp of the

office where they were paid. Further defacement of the stamps by crayon lines was to ensure against re-use of the stamps which had escaped the date-stamp.

After the books had been audited, and the company's annual Balance Sheet prepared, the books were stored in the archives of the distillery. At a later date it was possible for someone to remove the stamps and sell them to stamp dealers.

The above is only a theory, but it is a fact that sheets of the £5 stamp were used in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast during short periods of time in the years before 1896. From 1897 to 1903 not one single copy of the £5 stamp with Scottish or Irish date-stamp is known.



Type A5



Type A6

**Manchester Accounts and Account Branch P.O. Glasgow**

Between 1890 and 1897 there were 26 examples of the double circle MANCHESTER ACCOUNTS date-stamp. (Type A 5)

This is a cancellation often found on the top values, 10s. and £1, of Queen Victoria, overprinted I.R. OFFICIAL.

The most commonly found date-stamp on these two Official stamps is the oval ACCOUNT BRANCH P.O. GLASGOW date-stamp (as Type A6) I have 32 examples of the 10s., and 44 of the £1 with this Glasgow Account Branch oval date stamp, taken from Auction Catalogues, and all are dated October 1892 or October 1894.

The same Glasgow Account cancellation occurs on the £5 stamp in October and November 1894 only.

The highest value of the Official stamps of Queen Victoria was £1, and it would be natural to use, when accounting for large sums of Official Revenue, the £5 Postage stamp in place of five copies of the £1 I.R. OFFICIAL.

**The London Offices**

Between 1882 and 1898 a number of London Office date-stamps are found on the £5 stamps:

LONDON: N., E., N.E., N.W., S.E., S.W., W.C.

- South Eastern District
- South Western District
- West Central District Office
- North West Central Office
- West Central District Office W.C.

- BRANCH OFFICES: Victoria St. S.W.  
Eastcheap E.C.  
Mark Lane E.C.  
West Strand W.C.

- DISTRICT OFFICES: Cornhill E.C.  
Vere St. W.  
High Holborn W.C.  
High Rd., Knightsbridge  
Great Portland St., W.C.  
Gloucester Rd., Nr. Hereford Sq. S.W.  
Notting Hill, W.  
Upper Thames St., E.C.  
No. 12 Parliament St., S.W.  
Health Exhibition, S.W.  
St. Martin's-le-Grand.  
Charing Cross, W.C.

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Usage of the £5 G.B. (continued from page 475)

Summary of Usage 1878 to 1897

The " Whisky " Stamps (see above)	274
Manchester Accounts	26
London Offices	46
Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham	21
Other Scottish towns	10
The English Coastal Towns (see B 2)	10
Others	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>



"Registered Threadneedle St. B.O. E.C." oval date-stamp (Type A7)

The " REGISTERED THREADNEEDLE ST. B.O. E.C. " oval date-stamp is found between 1895 and 1902. Of the 37 copies recorded, 29 of them are dated in 1899. This does not indicate the posting of a registered packet. The Telegraphs Account Branch was situated in Threadneedle St. E.C., and it was probably the date-stamp chosen to cancel £5 stamps used in the Accounts Office in Threadneedle Street, London E.C. (Type A7).

Other similar type Registered oval date-stamps found are:  
 REGISTERED GRACECHURCH ST. E.C. 1895-1902.  
 6 examples.  
 REGISTERED LONDON CHIEF OFFICE., 1897-1899.  
 4 examples  
 REGISTERED CHATHAM HOUSE., 1 example

C.D.S. of English Towns and Money Order Offices

Between 1899 and 1903 there was a complete change in the pattern of usage of the £5 stamp. The date-stamps summarised above for 461 stamps used between 1878 and 1897 disappeared almost entirely. Instead of these we have in a sample of 174 stamps recorded during the five years 1899-1903.

106 stamps with c.d.s. of English towns.  
 28 stamps with c.d.s. of Money Order & Savings Bank Offices.

40 stamps " Registered " described above.

The Money Order & Saving Bank Stamps have, in addition to the name of the town, either: M.O.&S.B.; M.O.O., or an asterisk (★) embodied in the date-stamp.

Town c.d.s.

ALDERSHOT	1	LANCASTER	2
BATH	3	LOUGHBOROUGH	2
BLACKBURN	1	MAIDSTONE	2
BRADFORD, Yorks.	3	MIDDLESBROUGH	1
BURNLEY	1	NEWPORT, Mon.	2
BURTON-ON-TRENT	1	PLYMOUTH	6
CAMBRIDGE	1	SHEFFIELD	3
CHELTENHAM	3	STOCKPORT	2
CHESTER	20	SOUTHAMPTON	11
CREWE	3	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	1
DARLINGTON	3	WALSALL	3
DERBY	8	WARRINGTON	4
EXETER	4	WISBECH	3
GLOUCESTER	3	WOOLWICH	3
HALIFAX	1	WORCESTER	1
IPSWICH	4		

Year	Overall Copies seen	Summary No. with additional boxed cancel	No. of copies sold
1877	1	—	(Telegraph)
1878	5	3	(Telegraph)
1881	2	2	(Telegraph)
1882	28	1	6,570
1883	10	2	8,753
1884	10	3	9,294
1885	4	2	12,072
1886	12	5	12,632
1887	8	7	11,908
1888	30	12	12,861
1889	23	8	13,191
1890	8	—	14,269
1891	27	3	15,786
1892	38	1	17,012
1893	31	—	16,346
1894	89	—	18,079
1895	68	—	22,523
1896	51	—	22,297
1897	16	—	16,822
1898	5	—	(4,992)
1899	62	—	—
1900	62	—	—
1901	9	—	—
1902	34	—	—
1903	7	—	—
1905	1	—	—
<b>Totals</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>49</b>	

Money Order and Savings Bank c.d.s.

ASHFORD KENT M.O. & S.B.	1
BURTON-ON-TRENT M.O. & S.B.	1
BRIGHTON M.O. & S.B.	2
CAMBRIDGE M.O. & S.B.	1
CHELTHENHAM*	3
CREWE M.O. & S.B.	7
CROYDON*	1
GREAT YARMOUTH *	3
HASTINGS M.O. & S.B.	1
HEREFORD M.O. & S.B.	1
HUDDERSFIELD*	1
READING*	3
WARRINGTON M.O.O.	1
WEST HARTLEPOOL*	2

For those who want a fine-looking copy of the £5 stamp, I can recommend those described in this paragraph. The orange colour was bright, and the date-stamps light and distinct. They do not suffer from crayon lines or boxed rectangles, but sometimes from creasing.

The Orange Colour and the Blued Paper

Although not distinguishable in the auction photographs, the colour of the £5 stamp varies considerably. It started in 1877 as bright orange, but the shade became dull orange in 1881, and was orange-buff in 1882, when the " POSTAGE " £5 was issued. The buff shade of 1882 lasted till 1884, when the blued paper of 1882 changed to white.

This blue paper is distinguishable in most of the 1882 and 1883 stamps, though there are some which are definitely on white paper. I believe the reason to be that the chemical substance which caused the blue paper affected only the sheets on top of the pile, and failed to penetrate to those at the bottom. Although the blued paper has catalogue status,

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**Usage of the £5 G.B. (continued from page 481)**

I should have preferred to see the distinctive shade of buff, apparent in all stamps used in 1882-3, to the paper colouring, which affects some of the stamps in the same issue.

In 1898 the orange colour became brighter, and the best and brightest colours are found in the 1890 to 1893 stamps.

**Conclusions and Finale**

A stamp like the Great Britain £5, which could be bought in 1940 for £5, and is now worth £100 for a fine copy, can be said to have kept up with inflation.

A wise buyer does not spend money on a refrigerator, or a motor car, without first satisfying himself that the money is well spent. This article is intended to show a prospective buyer some of the points he should look for in a £5 orange stamp. There are many pitfalls, but I have taken the reader through the life of this stamp, and suggested to him that the usage of some years gives a better buy than the usage of others.

I have a preference for early usage, without the boxed initials, and a dislike of the "Whisky" stamps of 1894 to 1896, especially with crayon removed: 1885, 1887, 1898 and 1901 are the scarce years, about which I should like to know more: 1900 and 1902 look best in the album. I hope this article helps you with your choice.

**Acknowledgements**

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