

British Library - Philatelic Collections Vaccari sponsor della Newsletter

Continua la sponsorizzazione della Newsletter della British Library - Philatelic Collections di Londra grazie alla collaborazione con il direttore delle collezioni filateliche David R. Beech.

Come già per le volte precedenti, la Newsletter viene allegata alla rivista *Vaccari Magazine*. Con il numero 36, il nuovo numero della newsletter di autunno.

8000 copie vengono distribuite gratuitamente presso la British Library, ai soci della Royal Philatelic Society di Londra e agli abbonati di *Vaccari Magazine*.

The Bailey Collection

This year is the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and so it is appropriate that part of The Bailey Collection of Spanish Civil War material will be on exhibition in the philatelic frames on the Upper Ground Floor of the British Library from the 4th September, for one year.

Before the Civil War, the population of Spain was divided between the poor and the wealthy land-owning classes. After elections in 1931, King Alfonso XIII abdicated, and there followed a succession of Republican governments, none of which was able to effectively address the problems of the country. Political decisions were influenced by the conservative forces of the Roman Catholic Church and the Military hierarchy, and the country underwent a prolonged period of civil unrest, with many anarchist groups being formed, and a growing Communist movement.

The flash point for the war was the assassination of Calvo Sotelo, a leading right-wing politician and monarchist. A Nationalist military uprising took place at Melilla in North Africa on the 17th July 1936, followed by uprisings in most of the principal cities of Spain. General Franco was elected Generalissimo of the Nationalist armed forces on 1st October 1936.

The Nationalists were principally supported by Germany (who supplied an air force – the infamous Condor Legion), Italy and Portugal. Supporters of the Republicans included France and Russia, but the main help came from the International Brigades, which were made up of volunteers from around the world, most of whom were Communists coming to fight against Fascism.

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By the end of 1936 the Nationalists had captured half of Spain; however Madrid and the important industrial areas remained under the control of the Republican government. Fierce fighting took place in the North-East of Spain in 1938, and the Nationalists reached the Mediterranean, effectively cutting the Republican forces in half, and isolating the key city of Barcelona, which fell on 26th January 1939. The Republican Government finally surrendered on 28th March 1939.

During 1939 a particular twenty-five year period of a philatelic or area, the stamp office was a study of complete.

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Published by the British Library

PHILATELIC COLLECTIONS NEWSLETTER

HM Revenue and Customs Embossing Press

The Stamp Office of HM Revenue and Customs has recently donated to the British Library an Embossing Recording Press.

The Press is a 'Glover Eighteen Die Multi Recording Press', and was manufactured by Messrs Glover & Co., for use in Great Britain for the collection of duty by means of embossed revenue stamps. The first such press of this type dates from circa 1800. This example spent most of its working life in the Stamp Office, Belfast, which opened in 1912.

The collection of taxes has always been in a variety of different forms, but in 1694 with the establishment of the Stamp Office, a system had been devised for the issue and application of tax 'stamps'. These early stamps were either hand stamped, embossed, or printed directly onto the document, item, or label associated with the service for which the tax was to be paid. In more recent times the Stamp Office has only been responsible for the collection of duty on some types of legal and financial documents, and it is for these purposes that the Embossing Recording Press was used.

The impressing of coloured embossed duty stamps (such as you may find on the first page of your house deeds) is equivalent to the creation of money and calls for strict security control. Therefore when manufactured, the presses were supplied to the Inland Revenue in component form, which were then engineered and assembled at the Stamp Office. This resulted in each press being slightly different, this particular press being 'Number 92'. It had six padlocks in place which ensured integrity of operation. The embossed dies were made and engraved by the Royal Mint, and when last in service the Press would have had 18 dies ranging in value from 5p to £5000. The highest value die that has ever been used on a machine of this type is for £1,000,000.

The paintwork on the Press is thought to be original, and it has been refurbished by the Engineers of the Stamp Office. The work of the embossing recording presses has now largely been replaced by computerised certificates.

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During this period there was a great deal of disruption to the postal service, which makes this a particularly fascinating area to study. Housed in twenty-four volumes, the Bailey collection presents a philatelic survey of the conflict, arranged by town or area, the collection includes postal history, semi-official patriotic overprints and issues, and a study of the postal tax stamps, with many complete sheets and varieties.

One of the more interesting areas is mail from the island of Mallorca, which from an early stage of the conflict was under Nationalist control. The collection includes a cover from the Commander of the German pocket-battleship 'Admiral Graf Spee', from its operational base at Palma de Mallorca whilst on non-intervention patrol in Spanish waters.

In order to maintain communications between Republican Barcelona and Menorca (which was blockaded) a submarine postal service was proposed. Only one trip of the submarine 'C4' took place, and the collection includes a postcard that was carried on that voyage.

These are just a few of the highlights of this collection. The Library also holds The Shelley Collection of mail of the International Brigades.

The Bailey Collection was formed by Eric Verlin Bailey and is on loan to the British Library from the Spanish Study Circle. Further details of the Study Circle are available from the Secretary: Mrs J F Richardson, 16 Fairford Avenue, Luton, LU2 7ER. Email: richardsonandj@netscapeonline.co.uk



Postcard that was carried on Submarine 'C4' between Barcelona and Menorca

Researcher's Note By John Barwis

In Praise of the British Library – a Partner in Research.

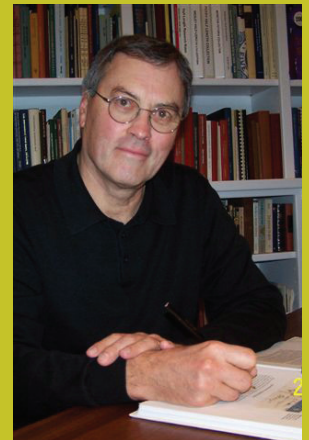
The debate about public versus private ownership of stamp collections has been long and sometimes harsh. Indeed, what serious collector has never dreamed of owning key stamps or covers forever removed from the philatelic marketplace? I certainly have, and for many years my unwavering preference was for purely private ownership. My recent research experience, particularly at the British Library, has significantly broadened this narrow view.

About four years ago I began writing a book on the 1850-59 first issues of Victoria, Australia – the so-called Half-Lengths. The authoritative text on the 26 printings of these complex issues is more than fifty years old, but arguably remains one of the most detailed philatelic research works ever published. Yet unknown areas persist and improvements are needed, so the new handbook will demonstrate colour shades and plating details, update earliest and latest recorded uses, complete unfinished plating work, and document the postal history of these issues. Publication is expected in 2007.

Publication-quality Half-Lengths range from scarce to very rare. Because no single collection, certainly including my own, is comprehensive enough to provide all the necessary material, access to other specialist holdings is critical for the book's success. Most collectors have been eager to help, and have generously provided scans and expertise. But the work has not been without frustration. Delays have been common – in one case I waited 18 months for a piece of information. A few collectors have opted not to participate, even to the point of refusing to provide a date on a recorded cover. Sadly, other philatelists will be unable to learn from their key items or their considerable experience.

In high contrast, my research visit to the Philatelic Collections of the British Library was an exercise in instant gratification. My congenial hosts, David Beech and Paul Skinner, helped plan the visit and showed a keen interest in my work. With their help I was able to quickly examine Half-Lengths from the Tapling and Ginger collections. All material was well cared for and well organized. The work environment was comfortable and well-lighted. The philatelic library was close at hand, so reference books and auction catalogues were readily accessible. High-resolution scans were provided for a modest fee, and permission to publish them as book illustrations was granted in reply to a simple written request. Happily, both David and Paul have since been available via email, and have been willing to fill a few gaps in my research notes.

In philatelic research accessibility is the issue, not ownership. I find it ironic that despite many philatelists' protestations about museums and libraries causing the virtual disappearance of rarities, the Tapling and Ginger collections are far more accessible than most private holdings. Serious students of philately owe it to themselves to visit the British Library.



John Barwis



1852 Die proof in blue-black, the only recorded 2d first-state proof. Tapling Collection

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

24 – 27 December 2006

31 December 2006

(Public Areas open 11.00 – 17.00)

1 January 2007

6 – 8 April 2007

9 April 2007

(Public Areas open 11.00 – 17.00)

**Disability Support Officer
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News Roundup

DEPARTMENT CLOSURE

The department has been closed from 1st September to allow for essential modifications to the equipment that controls the climatic conditions of the strong room, it will re-open for researchers on 6th November.

PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Many of the users of the Philatelic collections are working on books or articles and amongst those which have recently appeared are

Blue Mauritius – The Hunt for the World's Most Valuable Stamps

by Helen Morgan; Atlantic Books, 2006 (research aided by a grant from The Chand A and Z Research Fund for Classic Philately administered by The British Library)

The Investigation of the Grinnell Hawaiian Missionaries by The Expert Committee of The Royal Philatelic Society London

by Patrick Pearson on behalf of the Committee, Royal Philatelic Society London, RPSL Ltd, 2006

Historia Postal de Antioquia

by Juan Santa Maria Alvarez, 2005

The Dublin Find

by Don Madden and Karl Louis,
Mike Jackson Publications, 2006

Discovering King George V High Values Seahorses

by Bryan Kearsley, GB Philatelic Publications Ltd, 2005

New Zealand and Dependencies – A Philatelic Bibliography

compiled by David R Beech, Allan P Berry and Robin M Startup, 2004

Northern Rhodesia George VI Postage & Revenue Stamps

by Dr Alan Drysdall, 2006.

SOCIETY VISITS

During the first part of this year staff from The Philatelic Collections were pleased to welcome two specialist societies; a group from the Pitcairn Island Study Circle where shown original artwork, proofs and essays from The Crown Agents Philatelic and Security Archive. Some of the stamps had been designed by Jennifer Tombs in the 1960's and 1970's, and as she was a member of the audience, this created an interesting discussion on the procedures involved.

Members of the Great Britain Philatelic Society visited the Library in May, and examined a selection of items including from The Fletcher Collection, The Tapling Collection, and from The Board of Inland Revenue Stamping Department Archive.

The Briefmarken-Club Hannover von 1886 eV. enjoyed a visit to the Library in October and viewed items from the Philatelic Exhibition, and were given a presentation on the work of the department.

