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PHILATELIC COLLECTIONS NEWSLETTER

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Library rarities for The Stamp Show 2000

We are delighted to be contributing to the forthcoming international philatelic exhibition *The Stamp Show 2000* with an area showing major items from the Philatelic Collections and called *The British Library Rarities*.

We have selected some of our most famous, and perhaps not so famous rarities to show material from a range of different countries and periods of philately. Included are the short lived America Revenue tax stamps of 1765 in a sheet of twenty-six; a pair of the Canada 12d black of 1851; a number of essays and colour trials from the Allied Occupation of Germany; the unique Gold Coast 1883 1d on 4d magenta; one of the nine recorded copies of the Great Britain 1858-79 1d red Plate 77; the essay for the Great Britain 1876-81 £5 telegraph stamp with colour trials in gold; examples of all types of the 1851-52 Missionary issue of Hawaii; the unique entire bearing the India 1854 4 annas with



the error Head inverted; one of seven copies of the unissued 1956-58 £1 of Jamaica; the 'Post Office' issue of Mauritius 1d red and 2d blue, the blue *Mauritius*; the original designs for the first issue of stamps for New South Wales in 1850; a printing plate for the Orange Free State 1878 5/-; the Spain 1851 2 reales blue error of colour, one of only three recorded; the unique Transvaal 1870 1/- tete beche; the 1854-55 4d error inverted frame from Western Australia; and the unique unsevered horizontal strip of five

of the 4 rappen 1843 issue of Zurich, Switzerland.

We shall be describing all of these items for the philatelist and for the general visitor to the exhibition so that the importance of each will be clear and meaningful to all.

During *The Stamp Show 2000* our permanent Philatelic Exhibition at the British Library at St Pancras will remain open and we hope that visitors to

London will find the time to view this too.

The Stamp Show 2000 is taking place at Earls Court, London from Monday 22nd to Sunday 28th May, 2000. For the latest information visit the exhibition web site at: www.thestampshow2000.co.uk or contact the exhibition office:

The Stamp Show 2000,
British Philatelic Centre,
107 Charterhouse Street,
London, EC1M 6PT, UK,
Telephone (020) 7490 3112, Fax (020) 7490 4253
or E-mail: stamp.show2000@btclick.com



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

We are pleased to announce the collaboration of the Vaccari Philatelic Publishing House, of Vignola, Italy, who will be sponsoring several issues of our Newsletter during the next two years. Their principle, Paolo Vaccari, is an acknowledged expert in the early issues of Italy and the former Italian States.

CONTACT POINT

Our address is:

The British Library
Philatelic Collections
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB

Telephone: 020 7412 7635/6
Fax: 020 7412 7780
E-Mail: philatelic@bl.uk

Our information leaflet, describing the collections and services, may be obtained on request as above or viewed on the British Library website
<http://www.bl.uk/>

Seeing the Philatelic Collections:

The Philatelic Exhibition is situated at:
96 Euston Road,
London NW1 2DB
and is open free of charge, during the following times:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
09.30 to 18.00
Tuesday 09.30 to 20.00
Saturday 09.30 to 17.00
Sunday & Bank Holidays 11.00 to 17.00

The Library's public facilities will be closed on the following dates in the year 2000:

21-23 April (Good Friday,
Easter Saturday and Sunday)
24 April (Easter Monday)
1 May (Bank Holiday)
29 May (Bank Holiday)

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 to 16.00
Tuesday to Friday 09.30 to 16.00

One of my favourite stamps

Following the purchase in 1956 of a copy of the first setting of the British Central Africa 1898 'Internal Postage' provisional issue, and the slow acquisition of further copies during the fifties, it became apparent that this issue provided all the ingredients for a serious research project.

The first setting of these tokens, as they were referred to by the Acting Postmaster General in his official notice of 11th March 1898, was printed in much smaller numbers than the second setting, and gives a wide variety of frame-line lengths, breaks and positioning; the enclosed space varies in size, and the wording 'Internal Postage' gives rise to numerous examples with damaged, broken or dirty lettering.

Within the first few days of usage a more systematic form of control was introduced to supersede the postmaster's initials, which are reported to have been applied to the first £2 worth of cheque stamps (480). The backs of the tokens (15 x 2 rows) were embossed with uninked type. A control letter(s) and number were used, the letters in an apparently random selection, whilst the numbering was consecutive from 1 to 30.

The provisional issue was only used for correspondence within the Protectorate, and despite its short life from March to August 1898 underwent several sophistications, including a second setting of the type and the perforation of the stamps.

The embossed centre is from a die whose design was originally suggested to



**The British
Central Africa
1898 'Internal
Postage'
provisional issue**

by Ian Lane

Messrs. De La Rue by the Commissioner H.H. Johnston, during his negotiations for the printing of the first British Central Africa issue of 1895. This 'die and force', together with a small hand press such as used by legal establishments to emboss seals on to documents, was to be used in Johnston's words 'for embossing cheques and the like'.

As this die can only be applied to one token at a time, the positioning of the centre varied on each, making every one a unique item. The operator of this press appears to have been more skilled than that of the printing press as there are only a few instances of centres being inverted, missing or misplaced.

Information on the issue is limited, and is mainly based on the article, with many excellent illustrations, published by Sir Edward Bacon in *The London Philatelist* Volume 23 of August 1914. In this article, which reflects much of Sir Edward's work with the Earl of Crawford (the majority of whose collection was subsequently acquired by King George V), he distinguished, plated and described the material which was later mounted to give a magnificent display of the 1898 issue.

The assistance of the staff at the Philatelic Collections, British Library, where the Mosely Collection of British Africa holds many interesting copies of the issue, and the chance to view a rare perforated setting II with a handstamped 'Specimen' overprint in the Tapling Collection, has helped considerably in furthering the research into this rather unusual issue.



The Supplementary Collection

This Collection comprises some 1,000 pages of proofs, essays, stamps and a considerable quantity of postal stationery from several sources which were donated between 1900 and 1922.

The donations consist of four main groups. The first, in July 1900 which came from the Crown Agents, was of British Colonial material which included some rare proofs from Messrs De La Rue, (some reprinted from Perkins Bacon Dies) imperforate and issued stamps for a number of the Crown Colonies. Examples of the die proofs, both black and white and colour, are Bermuda 1865-73, British Columbia and Vancouver Island 1861-65, Ceylon 1857-58, Jamaica 1860-63, and 1870-72, Mauritius 1858-59 'Britannia design', Straits Settlements 1868, and Western Australia 1854-61.

Secondly, from October, 1900 the

Crown Agents also provided a copy of all their new issues up to 1922. This group includes a number of rare items including the Straits Settlements high values of King Edward VII and King George V, and a copy of the unissued Trinidad 1896 5d surcharged 3d. After 1922 the stamps supplied by the Crown Agents form the separate Crown Agents' Collection which is still being added to today.

Thirdly, in 1914 the Postmaster General gave a large quantity of stamps, postcards and other postal stationery which had been sent to the United Kingdom by several West Indian Islands, who had received these items from the Universal Postal Union in Berne. Most of the British Colonial items in this group are marked with the word 'Specimen'.

Finally, the Collection contains one of only four sets of the Indian 1854-55

proofs taken from four copper plates and nine lithographic stones before they were defaced in September, 1916. These proofs were donated by The Royal Philatelic Society London.

Originally the Collection was housed in Victorian red leather albums (used by Thomas Tapling for his Collection) contained in matching slip cases. These volumes had deteriorated over the years to a point where they required replacing, and during the last twelve months the album pages have been rehoused in polyester sleeves, and stored in archival quality conservation boxes. One of Tapling's albums has been preserved.

The Collection, although not on permanent display, is available for research purposes by appointment with the curatorial staff. For further details, see the Contact Point column on the back page.



The Tapling Collection of Spain at Stampex



Great interest was shown by visitors to *Spring Stampex* in March when we exhibited part of the Tapling Collection of Spain from 1850 to 1854 to mark the 150th Anniversary of the first Spanish postage stamps.

The most interest was shown in the 1851 2 reales blue error of colour

which is one of only three copies recorded. The error was caused by the accidental insertion of a 2 reales cliché in the printing plate of the 6 reales. Until 1899 the status of the three known copies was unclear, until a se-tenant pair of the 2 reales error in blue with the 6 reales in blue was discovered, proving the stamp to be genuine and an error.

Mr Tapling's copy was the first of the three to be discovered and to test its status the collector who sold it to Mr Tapling in 1884, W.A. S. Westoby, had boiled it thus removing almost all of the postmark.

If you missed seeing what is Europe's rarest postage stamp it will be on exhibition again in *The British Library Rarities* at *The Stamp Show 2000*.

The Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture

The 6th Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture will be given by David Beech, Curator of the Philatelic Collections on Saturday, 4th November 2000 in the British Library Conference Centre, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. The title of the lecture is *Philatelic Research at the British Library*.

Further details will be announced later.

Access to the British Library Philatelic Collections

Because of our involvement in *The Stamp Show 2000* Exhibition our Philatelic Collections Researchers Room and curatorial services will not be available to researchers from Monday 15th May to Monday 29th May, 2000. Other reading room services will be open as usual during this period. Thereafter, curatorial staff will be available from 9.30 am on Tuesday, 30th May, 2000.

During the closed period the curatorial staff can be contacted via our office answering service, fax or e-mail. See Contact Point on the back page for further details.

Published Research

Many users of the Philatelic Collections material are working on books, papers or articles. Amongst those which have been published recently are:

Great Britain – Dice Duty 1711–1862

by R. H. Champion, FRPSL and E. J. Hitchings. *The Revenue Journal of Great Britain*, Volume X, Number 1, Whole Number 37, June 1999.

British banknote stamps

by Harry Dagnall, FRPSL. *The American Revenuer*, July/August 1999, Volume 53, Number 7, Whole Number 517.

KGV Experimental Paper 1924

by Alan Moorcroft, FRPSL. *The G.B. Journal* Volume 37, Number 6, November/December 1999.

Hong Kong, 1941–1945, The Effects of the Second World War on the supply of postage stamps and other Postal Materials

by R. V. M. Vousden. *The London Philatelist*, Volume 108, September 1999.