2/1994

# THE 1887 "JUBILEE" ISSUE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND ITS DERIVATIVES

Display at the Royal Philatelic Society, London: January 20 1994

This presentation shows the "Jubilee" Issue and overprints thereon for Departmental use, British Levant Offices, and various colonies. The basic issue is made up of the 12 stamps issued 1 Jan 87 plus the £1 Green, 10d and 4½d issued later, and the color changes to the ½d and 1s done in 1900. Thus it includes all those stamps issued by Great Britain between 1887 and 1900 (the £1 brown-lilac watermarked Orbs was an error of watermark, not an intentionally produced stamp), but not those previously issued and continued in use unchanged through the period (1d, 2s6d, 5s, 10s, £1 Brown-lilac, and £5).

Sequence of the display, with a few notes for the viewer:

SECTION 1 (Frames 27-30): Origin and Development of the Issued Stamps, arranged by denomination.

Frame 27: The issue of Jan 1887 was the proximate result of the 1884 Stamp Committee and its response to public and official dissatisfaction with the 1884 "Lilac & Green" Issue.

Frame 28: Pg 1, Reply Paid experiments. The head plate of the 1½d stamp was used in a series of essays towards a two-part stamp paying outward and reply postage, similar in a sense to the double (reply) postcards. Other essays were based on other designs, not related to the Jubilees. No reply paid stamp resulted, and the project was terminated. The examples shown indicate the range of trials based on this design.

Pg 4, 2d Scarlet duty tablets. The colors of this issue, being centered on the double fugitive lilac and green inks developed by De La Rue, are often difficult to constructively identify. Although the reds were not double fugitive inks, they present several knotty problems. Here, the scarlet (sometimes called vermilion) shade is shown as the result of settling of the ink, where to coloring matter (based on the insect Cochineal pigments) segregates from the carrier (linseed and other oils), giving a very transparent printing devoid of opaque pigmentation. This was a common problem for printers of that period (and up to the 1940's). It is, in a sense, a display of the skill of De La Rue that this effect is so seldom seen in their work. This is not in any way related to the problem of aniline red, for which please refer to the 4½d and 10d stamps.

Pg 9, Railway Letter Essays. These essays were attempted to provide a single stamp paying 2d fee imposed by the railways for carriage of a "letter parcel" plus the 1d due to the Post Office for that same service. The stamp was not produced. Numerous railways designed and printed their own stamps for the purpose (several usages are shown in the later sections of this display).

Pg 10 shows examples of plate damage caused by inking rollers, which were normally rotated by friction against the printing plate, and thus were not rotating when first contacting the leading edge of the plate. The cure was placement of rules or lines (called "Jubilee lines") around the edges of the plates. Several other values show the development of these lines under the heading "Marginal Settings".

Frame 29: Pgs 1&2, 4d Marginal Settings. The 4d value, produced in small panes of 20 stamps, was chosen for much of the experimentation on marginal settings. The rules ("Jubilee lines") were developed to protect the edges of the plate from damage caused by the inking rollers; the pillars (or "ladders") were designed to support the gutters between panes (which were 2 stamps wide), preventing curling on press, and thus improving the registration between the colors printed; the thin rules were tried on the outer edges of the sheet (rather than between the panes) to reduce curling, but were not found to be of help and were not generally used. The corner forms of the "Jubilee lines" (rounded, square, then finally cut away entirely) were designed do ease production difficulties and increase time between replacement.

Pgs 6&7, 5d Dies. As was seen in the Frontispiece, both duty dies of the 5d were produced and proofed during 1886; Die 2 was not a replacement in 1888 necessitated by damage to the first die. However, only one duty plate was produced from leads struck from Die 1, all subsequent plates showing characteristics of Die 2. Note that, in addition to the "square dots" (which can be unreliable in distinguishing the dies), the left hand '5' of die 1 is centered substantially to the left where that '5' on Die 2 is quite well centered in its tablet.

Frame 30: Pg 3 et seq, 10 Reds. Red inks have, for centuries, been the bane of printers trying to create consistent colors. Even today, red inks are generally unreliable in color matching, and are extremely sensitive to impurities, cleanliness of the press, and atmospheric conditions (humidity, smog, etc). The red ink used for the 10d (and the 4½d) were originally based on Cochineal pigments. At some point aniline dyes were introduced and experimentally used. Probably some mixture of Cochineal pigments and aniline dyes was settled upon (if indeed any settlement was reached during this period).

Either of these coloring materials, depending on density of pigment, viscosity, purity of carrier, and other factors would produce colors ranging from scarlet through carmine from the same can of ink. Therefore, I cannot consider the visible shades in that range to be significant. However, there is a simple means of separating the two classes of ink: Aniline dyes fluoresce under long-wave ultraviolet illumination, Cochineal pigments do not. In this display I have classed this fluorescence into four categories or ranges: NONE, CARMINE, CHERRY, and SCARLET. The stamps cannot be segregated into these categories under visible light; furthermore, each of

these ranges contain stamps which visibly vary from scarlet to carmine,

It is my opinion that if we are to study the colors of this stamp in a way that is philatelically significant (and not just an exercise in subjective perception of color) it is this aspect we must address: the color as related to the formulation of the ink used to produce it.

As regards the catalogues, I believe the catalogued "deep bright carmine" shade is (was) the extreme end of the LWR-SCARLET group, and that the current (new) listing by Gibbons (GB Specialized, 10th ed.) is not meaningful. More research must be done before attempting to codify these matters.

Pg 11, £1 Color Trial. Although very close to the color of the issued stamps, this color trial does not exactly match the Imperforate Specimen at right, nor the Imprimatur, both of which under magnification are a bit darker.

SECTION 2 (Frames 31-46): Usage of the Issue

Frame 31: Domestic use within Great Britain

The basic postage rate within Great Britain at this time was, of course, 1d. This was generally paid with the 1d Lilac of 1881, which continued to be the workhorse stamp for the rest of the reign. As this stamp was not part of the Jubilee issue, only limited domestic usage is shown, restricted to other rates for which stamps of this issue were intended.

Frames 31-44: Usage to other countries:

The range of use of this issue is shown, arranged by destination rather than rate or service, to give a feeling for the breadth and global scope of the postal services during this period.

In terms of rates, the Jubilee period begins with the last vestiges of route and/or carrier dependent rates, such as the 4d rate to Mexico and parts of South America, the 5d rate to India, and 6d rates to the Australian colonies (among many others). In 1891, with increasing membership in the Postal Union, the British Post Office unilaterally reduced all rates to those of the Union, regardless of membership, and then to 2½d per ½ oz worldwide. This greatly simplified rates, at least until the beginning of the Imperial Penny Post in 1898 which again differentiated rate by destination. A wide range of these rates, from all three periods, is shown here.

The sequence of destinations shown is roughly eastward from Europe to the Pacific, then the Americas from north to south.

The Section headings, in sequence, are:

1. Europe
2. Africa
3. Ottoman Empire
4. Asia
5. Australasia & the Pacific
6. The Americas

Frames 44-46: Usage "Abroad"

This part of the display shows the use of the "Jubilee" stamps on mail originating outside Great Britain. This includes "Paquebot" use (this system dates from 1894), usage in South Africa during the Boer War, and in those parts of the Empire where these were the only authorized stamps (e.g. the Niger Company Territories and Ascension). The Section is arranged alphabetically by point of origin. (N.B. the unoverprinted stamps used in the British Levant offices are shown in Section 3).

SECTION 3 (Frames 46-52): Derivatives - the Overprinted Stamps.

This Section shows the stamps produced by overprinting and/or surcharging the basic stamps of the issue.

Frame 46-48: Great Britain Departmentals ("Officials")

Frame 48-49: British Levant (including usage of un-overprinted stamps of the issue)

Frame 49: British East Africa

Frame 49-51: Bechuanaland and Bechuanaland Protectorate

Frame 51: Cape of Good Hope (Mafeking Siege Issues)

Frame 51-52: Niger Coast Protectorate

Frame 52: Zululand

APPENDIX: Philatelic Fun

No display would be complete without some example of the humorous aspects of our marvelous Hobby.

A Short Personal Note:

I will be present at the display and will gladly answer (so far as I am able) any questions about it. I would be particularly appreciative of comments from you, the viewers, on some of the research shown, as this is of necessity a "work in progress" and all input is helpful in pursuit of knowledge.

Thank you.

Jeffrey K Weiss