# THE STORY OF THE QV JUBILEES

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By

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*Front cover illustrations are all from Laydown 1:*

*Front :*
Queen Victoria Golden Jubilee celebration postcard 1887 – see *Frame 3*.
Die proofs no.288 for solid ground and no.289 for white ground with unique endorsements – see *Frame 1*.
Cut down small head die proof trial 1884 achieving a first on a white background – see *Frame 1*.
Unique 4d block setting 4A; two continuous unbroken Jubilee lines with thin marginal lines – see *Frame 11*.
1½d reply-paid experiment with different backgrounds in se-tenant strip– see *Frame 6*.
2d head proof with unique red endorsement – see *Frame 7*.

*Above:*
Small head die proofs no.288 for solid ground and no.289 for white ground showing white line around profile – see *Frame 1*.

This display presents the set of definitives commonly referred to as the Jubilees. The story starts with the decision to produce an improved stamp series for Great Britain. Early trials and proofs are followed with each stamp's development and issue value by value; up to the 4d value in the 1st laydown, with the remaining values through to 1/- in the 2nd laydown. A look at their use then follows which takes us through a glimpse of the postal history of this period, showing uprated stationery and correspondence. During these times postal services were established in new British territories and form a chapter of the story.

# LAYDOWN 1

## FRAMES 1 & 2 - DEVELOPMENT

The Jubilee issue arose from a widespread dissatisfaction with the 'Lilac and Green' issue of 1883-1884. This issue is shown, together with initial attempts by Warren William De La Rue (WWD 1847-1921) to improve it through modifications involving colour trials on coloured and white papers. When these trials proved inadequate thought turned to completely new designs, and a committee called the 1884 Stamp Committee was formed to address the problem. Initial experiments by WWD with bicoloured and embossed designs are displayed, as well as a number of die proofs for the small head to be used on the finally accepted designs. These dies were of two types, in which the stamps had either a solid background or a white background.




## FRAME 3 - JUBILEE EPHEMERA

Some interesting items to view including the instructions for the ball in the Guildhall.



## FRAME 4 - ½d VERMILION

The first value is introduced with a die proof and imprimatur. Not surprisingly this value was the most printed with 37.9 million sheets recorded over 13 years. Only the ½d sheets were printed with a control letter at the bottom of each sheet. A full selection of control pieces is shown, starting from setting 1B – control letter 'A' - of 1887 through to the final control letter 'Q' in 1899. Control 'G' is shown with imperforate margin, this being one of the scarcest controls. The range of shades, and the variety 'inverted watermark' are displayed.




## FRAME 5 - ½d BLUE-GREEN

In 1900 the ink colour for the ½d was changed to conform to the UPU scheme. The new ink contained lead, which was contrary to contract, and was soon changed to an ink with a zinc base. However, this was water-soluble and, being also contrary to contract, a final change was made in November 1900 to organic ink. These changes are shown by reference to cancellation dates, as the shades cannot be simply differentiated. In contrast to the earlier vermilions, all were now printed under the single control letter 'R'. This value was the second most printed, with 9.4 million sheets recorded over two years. Examples of OFFICIAL overprints follow, issued to authorise free postage by government departments.



## FRAME 6 - 1½d PURPLE & GREEN

This was the first of the bicoloureds, needing separate head and duty die proofs. These, together with a registration sheet imprimatur, introduce this value. The print setting 2, with both continuous green & purple horizontal marginal rules, is the scarcest setting. The 'horns' variety, as well as shades, are displayed. The shades vary due to normal day-to-day production, as there is no evidence of ink changes.



The reply-paid experiment of 1894 used a double stamp in blue, and a se-tenant strip of three stamps with different backgrounds is shown; however, the idea was never adopted.



## FRAMES 7 & 8 - 2d GREEN & RED

The first of the more specialised presentations is for the 2d; much of this formed the basis for a Gold medal at Stampex 2018. This is the first stamp of the issue on a white background - a technical breakthrough by DLR. Some unique pieces are displayed, opening with a head die proof bearing a unique red annotation. Two further full-size head proofs are shown, one with the new concept of the marginal line. The duty proof 'AFTER HARDENING', with the final lined background approved for printings, is shown. Another is the only known duty proof which demonstrates the duty marginal rule. The original but rejected 2d is shown for comparison, and note the different duty plate shape. Three imprimaturs are shown including marginals from both the first and second registration sheets.





The first printings are in setting 1 with clear margins. Setting 2 has two continuous rules, with only 9 pieces recorded (including a pair reported in 1987 whose whereabouts now is unknown); three pieces are shown here today.



The bulk of the 2d printing had broken duty rules - settings 3A and 3B - but examples showing the 3B unbroken interpane margin are scarce. A double page displays the shades, with five of the examples expertised, and is shown with the CANCELLED print-room colour standard. Varieties are shown, the scarcest being the 'inverted watermark'. Colour trials for this value were authorised in 1899 in the development of the 1/- bicolour carmine and green. Thirty different colour combinations are known, and two sheets present a selection.

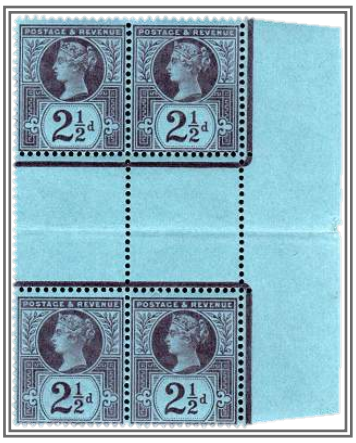




## FRAME 9 - 2½d PURPLE ON BLUE & 3d PURPLE ON YELLOW

Die proofs here show the complete design, as these were monocolour issues. An imprimatur of each value is shown.

Firstly the 2½d value: The die was rehardened in 1900, and a series with a striking book piece and three die proofs relating to this is shown. This value was the third most printed (after the two ½d values) with more than 3 million sheets recorded over 15 years. Setting 2B, showing the unbroken interpane margin with only a rule, is by far the rarest for this value. Examples of settings 1 and 3 are also shown.





Secondly the 3d value: A striking book piece with associated die proof are shown. The settings follow a similar pattern to the above. Examples of settings 1 and 3 are shown, but the extremely elusive setting 2B, requiring an unbroken interpane margin, has sadly not found its way into the collection. Small breaks - known as 'cuts' - were added to the marginal lines in later printings and identify the plate used; three examples are shown. Shades are of particular note here as the authorities confirmed that a colour variation occurred by accident; certified examples on orange paper are shown alongside the print-room standard on yellow paper.






## FRAMES 10 & 11 - 4d GREEN & BROWN

This is another specialised presentation, much of which formed the basis for a Large Gold medal at Stampex 2017. Some unique pieces are featured. This is the first value to have a 'fringe margin', a feature introduced for the Jubilees, also found on the 9d and, later, 4½d and 10d values. Two full-size head proofs are shown, as is the pair of unique proofs produced to show the appearance of rules on the stamps.







The two imprimaturs shown are both marginals from the second registration sheet (setting 1B). The 4d has five different marginal print settings, the most for any value, and all are displayed. Setting 1 - no marginal rules or blocks - and setting 2, with its marginal lined blocks, are shown first. Settings 3, 4B and 5B are displayed as complete panes, showing the differences in the marginal markings.

An unusual block was reported in 1965 (by Philip Lyall) eventually giving rise to the new setting 4A. This block remains the only extant example, arising from a small number of sheets produced before the head rules were cut away at the corners.



The bulk of the 4d printing was with the head rule cut away at corners - settings 5A and 5B - but examples showing the 5B unbroken interpane margin – displayed here - are very scarce. The shades are displayed, together with the CANCELLED print-room colour standard. Varieties are shown, the scarcest being the 'inverted watermark'. The 1st laydown concludes with a half-sheet of 4 panes, the largest known outside institutional collections.

# LAYDOWN 2

## FRAME 1 - 4½d & 5d

The 4½d value had only one setting, with continuous head and duty rules around each pane. The 5d value had three settings. Setting 1 is elusive and is particularly difficult to find without a SPECIMEN overprint. Examples of this setting are shown with both Type 9 and Type 12 overprints. Also shown are die proofs for both values, the 5d value being represented by proofs with both 'BEFORE HARDENING' and 'AFTER HARDENING' annotations. Settings 2 and 3 of the 5d are also displayed, the latter setting including examples with both types of documented cuts.







## FRAME 2 - 6d & 9d

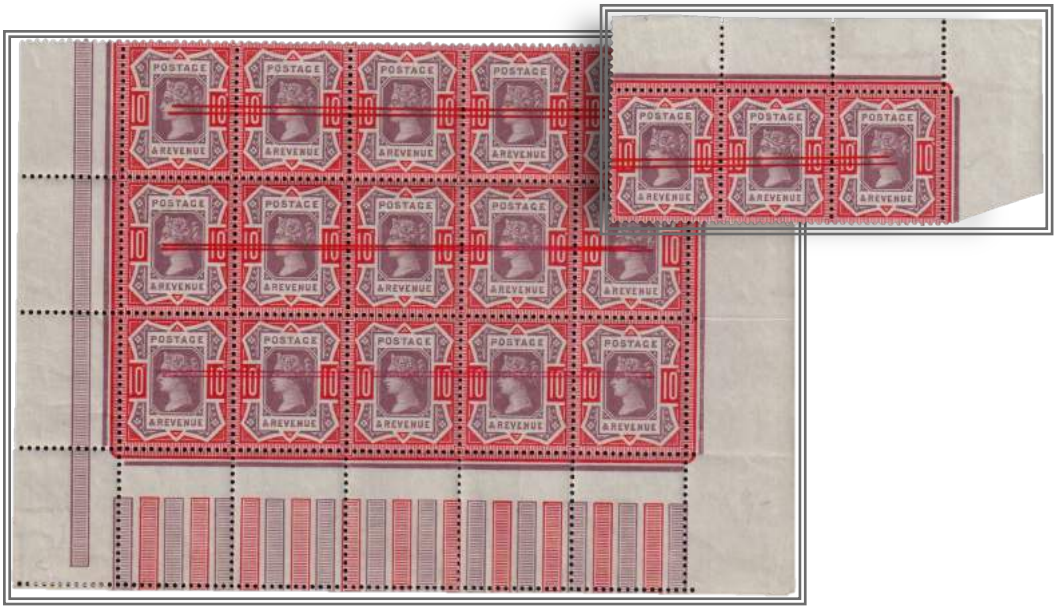
Examples for all three settings of the 6d are shown. The second setting is rare, as in the case of the 2½d and 3d values. Three examples of this setting are displayed, though none have a complete interpane margin with adhesives on both sides. Setting 1 is also difficult to find, especially in large multiples, and is represented by a block of 20. All settings of the 9d are displayed, the first and second settings being much more difficult to find than the third.






## FRAME 3 - 10d & 1/-

The 10d value had only two settings. In setting 1, which is very rare (only 8 pieces are known), there are vertical blocks and rules, whilst setting 2 has horizontal blocks and rules. Two examples of setting 1 are shown, one used and one consisting of two parts of a pane. Other interesting pieces for this value are: a block with a previously undocumented marginal cut, a block of nine with a double SPECIMEN overprint, a centre-cross piece with stamps from the four panes of the 80-set sheet, and a pair of special die proofs produced to show the effect of adding marginal rules to the stamps (similar to those for the 2d and 4d values).




The 1/- green value had two settings, both of which are shown. For the bicoloured 1/- carmine and green there was only one setting, shown in a corner marginal block. Die proofs for both 1/- values are displayed, the bicoloured version being represented by both head and duty proofs.






## FRAME 4 - USAGE

Covers used in the first weeks of the 1887 issues are particularly elusive. A hypothesis is that significant stocks of the 'Lilac & Greens' were used up first. A scarce early combination envelope with 1884 3d & ½d 'Lilac & Greens' and a 4d Jubilee dated 2 August 1887 to Germany is shown.

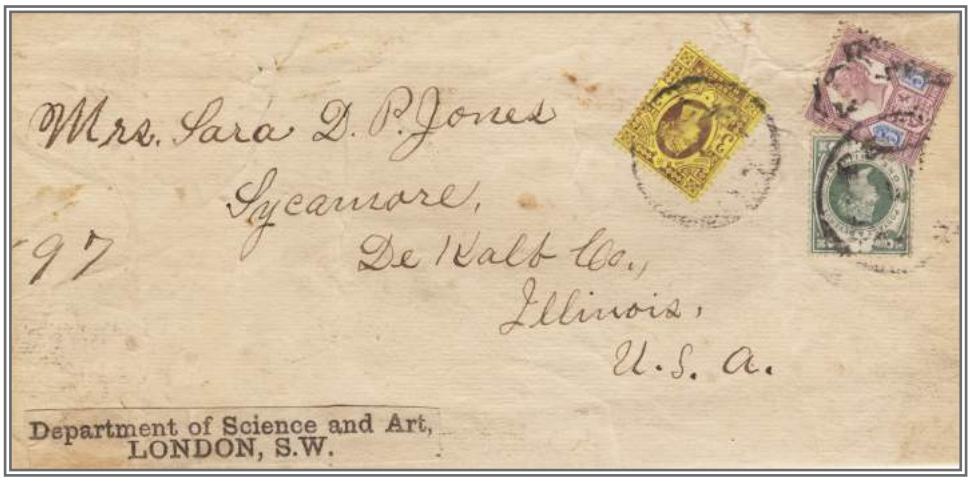



The covers are grouped into types of usage starting with the INLAND USAGE with ½d for printed papers and letters at higher rates. The ½d adhesive was first allowed on postcards from 1894. The rate dropped from 22 June 1897 to the "Jubilee rate", the cheapest ever GB letter rate. Examples show frankings to uprate mail for registration. Note the scarce 2d scarlet shade, late registration fees and the new express service. Note also a Type 2 express label with late use in 1901, after the 1897 introduction of Type 3, and the scarce early example of a Type 3 label. The Jubilees were used not only to pay postage, but also were used for Revenue, as shown on the displayed receipts.



## FRAME 5 - FOREIGN USAGE

A range from low frankings to the higher values for different UPU rates including European countries, Vera Cruz (Mexico) and USA are shown. An underpaid letter is shown marked for tax due, also an entire from Coutts & Co. with an interesting banking story referencing Her Majesty. Some frankings are perfin examples, which many firms preferred for their business.




## FRAMES 6 & 7 – STATIONERY & FOREIGN REGISTERED MAIL

Stamped to Order stationery continued through this period and uprated examples are shown with Jubilees. An unusual example to Russia with "arrival before dispatch" is due to the Julian calendar. Jubilees on a range of official registered stationery or preprinted commercial envelopes to interesting destinations are displayed. These include a "return" from Russia, and one with Stanley Gibbons' wax seals to Spanish Cuba. Another envelope is from a dealer, Whitfield King, with correspondence to a collector, and another is a novelty, with adhesives used as seals on the reverse of an envelope to New York, which appears to have been delivered successfully. Higher value frankings including 6d and 10d are shown. The 1900 1/-, reissued in green & carmine and used on cover, is sought for its scarcity. This August example is one of the three known in its first weeks of use.

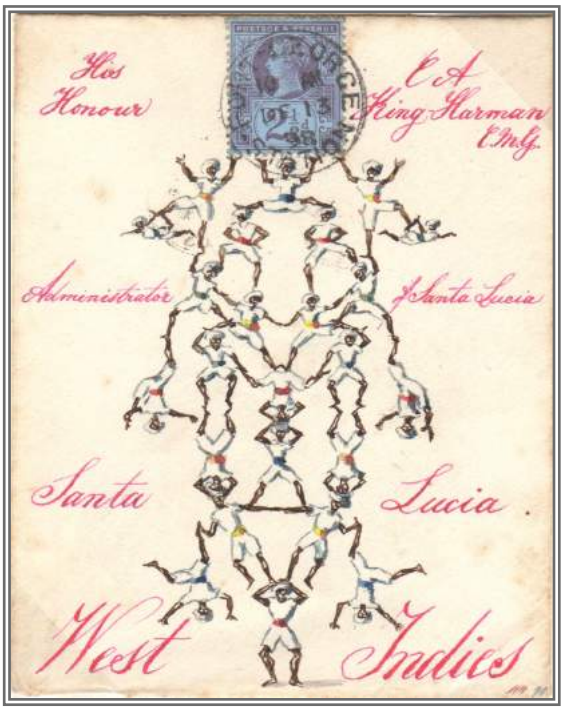


A 1/- was the highest Late Fee but only available from the London Chief Office and scarcely used. This bank envelope uses strips of 4d franking in payment, together with the registration fee and five times postage rate.




## FRAME 8 - EMPIRE

Destinations in the British Empire with a range of values up to a 1/- are displayed showing some interesting stories e.g. to a Royal Navy survey ship "to be called for" in Fiji. UPU rates including Jamaica, in the early years of the Army & Navy Co-operative Society, sent to the military base with an interesting invoice for the colonel are shown. A hand painted cover to Santa Lucia, West Indies from the King-Harman collection is shown (ex Dr Ramsay) as is an early Jubilee cover to Demerara, used 2 May 1887, possibly the earliest example of 4d used on cover. This adhesive can only be from the 4d first printing. Later, a concession rate was introduced in 1898 of 1d/½oz to anywhere in the Empire, offering a reduction from the 2½d rate.



## FRAME 9 - PARCEL POST

The Parcel Post was introduced in 1883 but only the parcel post labels Types 3 to 7 (Wiseman) were current during the Jubilees period. The earliest shown is a Type 3 (1885-1887) used on 18 April 1887. It was in use for a very short period during the Jubilee period until the label was superseded later in 1887 by Type 4 with an added 'X LIST'.







Examples of usage are shown for each label type with highlights of the label changes. Type 5 was introduced upon the Registration of Parcels in 1891, and Type 6 with 'long arms' followed. The rate was reduced on 1 June 1897 to 4d from the 4½d double rate with 1d/lb for additional weight.







The Inland Revenue, prior to these Jubilees, approved overprinting adhesives with GOV[T] PARCELS. These adhesives were issued to enable free parcel postage for government departments. The scarce SPECIMEN overprints Types 15 and 11 (not listed by Samuel & Huggins) are shown. The Post Office produced its own labels in due course and an example of a government parcel post label GPP3 is displayed.



## FRAME 10 - OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

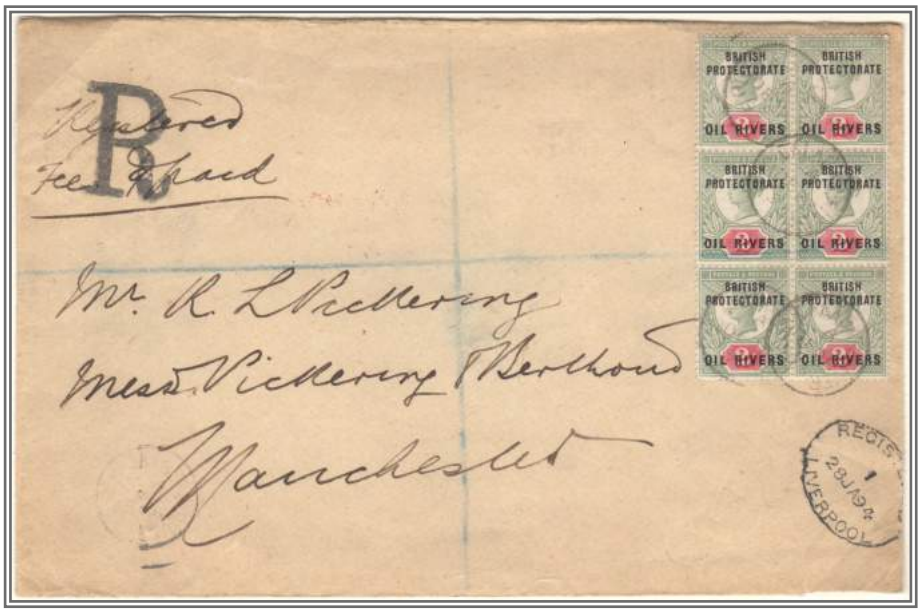






The Jubilees were overprinted by DLR to use in the newly established postal services administered by Great Britain. There were five new territories and all were in Africa. A selection of values including SPECIMEN and CANCELLED overprints together with scarcities are shown. Some were later surcharged locally to deal with supply shortages. The Boer War led to shortages leading to Mafeking overprints. A commercial cover from Oil Rivers (later southern Nigeria) with a block of 2d paying a large registration fee and postage to England is shown.



## FRAME 11 - DEATH OF THE QUEEN

Queen Victoria's demise in 1901 brought about preparations for a replacement head design, with eight values retaining the successful Jubilee designs. The King Edward replacements were issued during 1902. Combination covers with both Queen Victoria and the new King Edward VII adhesives are shown displaying late usage and a very late usage in 1909. It was a long time - 1960 - before another GB bicolour was issued.







----------END OF THE DISPLAY----------

# TIMELINE FOR THE JUBILEE ISSUE

1st August 1883. The 9d green value of the 'Lilac and Green' set is issued. It is created for the parcel post service, which begins on this date, and pays for parcels weighing between 3 and 5 lb.

Before 1st April 1884. Warren William De La Rue (WWD) experiments with stamp designs on coloured papers.

1st April 1884. The remainder of the 'Lilac and Green' issue appears. The public finds the stamp designs dull and uninspiring, though their protests are largely ignored by the government. Of far greater concern is the observation by Post Office employees that the Revenue might suffer, since once a stamp has been cancelled it is frequently impossible to tell whether the right rate has been paid.

1884, after April 1st. The outcry from the public, and objections from Post Office staff, regarding the 'Lilac and Greens' forces the Inland Revenue into action. WWD is charged with remedying the situation. He begins by experimenting with the current lilac designs on different coloured papers. He also produces four copies of a scheme (June 13th 1884) to show what could be achieved by printing all the values on coloured papers, and looks at different colours on white paper. Examples on the coloured papers are sent out to postmasters of the major cities to ask for their observations. Several postmasters produce trial cancellations. The coloured paper scheme is rejected as being insufficiently radical, as is the scheme on white paper, and a committee is set up to produce an entirely new scheme.

August 1884. A bicolour essay based on a 4d design leads to die proofs of both the head design and the remainder of the design appearing. This seems to be the earliest bicolour experiment. Dummy designs, with corner letters, for a 2d with large head and 3d with small head, are also made by WWD whilst exploring new designs and processes.

31st October 1884. The 1884 Stamp Committee convenes for the first time. It consists of Mr. T. Jeffery as Chairman, and Messrs. J.S. Purcell, H.R. Page, W.H. Mulock and T.C. Bokenham as members. Warren De La Rue and WWD are also invited to become members but decline. An early decision is that the Committee should concern itself only with the 1½d to 1/- values. The ½d, 1d, 2/6, 5/-, 10/-, £1 and £5 designs are considered satisfactory. The decision remains unchanged for the high values, but towards the end both the ½d and 1d come under scrutiny. Ultimately the 1d design is retained, but the ½d is altered.

31st October 1884 to 13th April 1885. The Committee meets on 24 occasions during this period. It considers several schemes (Adams, Carey, Clark et al) and also embossed essays, but ultimately rejects the idea of embossing. The key meeting takes place on Friday 12th December 1884, when WWD presents his latest scheme, the designs of all values other than the ½d being provisionally selected. The 2½d, 3d and 6d stamps are to be printed respectively on Blue, Yellow and Crimson paper, and the others are to be either wholly in a doubly fugitive colour or in two colours – one doubly fugitive and the other singly fugitive. All that follows after this date ties up remaining loose ends.

13th April 1885. The Committee sits for the final time, and WWD presents designs for the ½d. The chosen design has '½d' in each corner, which they agree must be deleted.

25th May 1885. The Board of Inland Revenue authorises work on the new Jubilee stamps to start, beginning with the small head dies. These dies are of two types: for stamps with solid background (Die No. 288) and with white background (Die No. 289).

1st January 1887. The first stamps of the Jubilee issue appear. They are printed either on 480-set Imperial Crown watermarked sheets or, for the 4d and 9d stamps, which have a fringe design around their edge, on a new – 320-set – sheet (also Crown watermarked).

Early 1887. It quickly becomes apparent that the longevity of the printing plates can be increased by adding protective leads around the edges of, and between, the panes. The idea of marginal rules is accepted, and divisional leads are prepared to accommodate them.

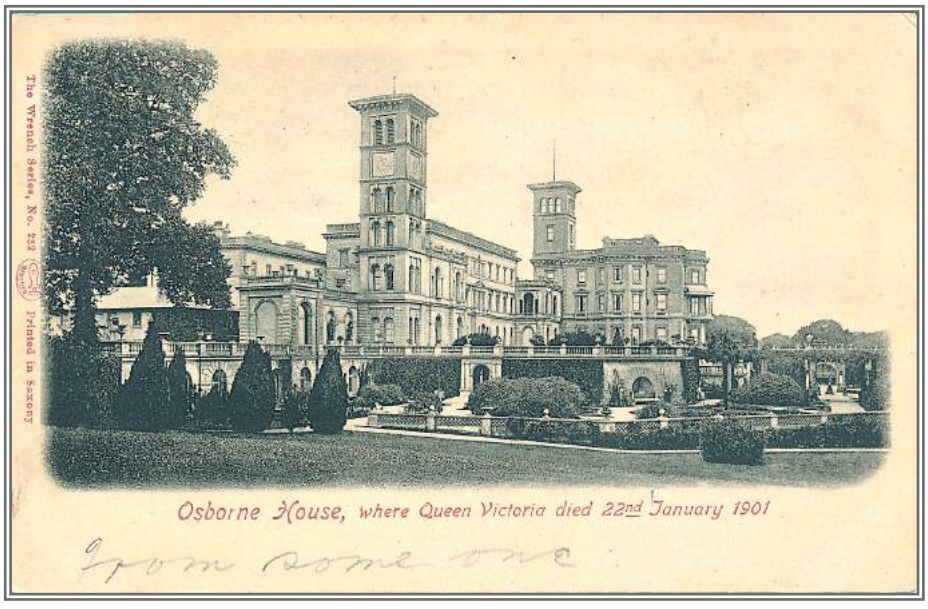
24th February 1890. The 10d value is issued to pay for 2-ounce letters abroad.

15th September 1892. The 4½d value is issued, created for the parcel post service. The potential for a 4½d stamp arises from the parcel post rates introduced on May 1st 1886 for parcels of 1-2lb, but it is not until the end of 1891 that steps are taken to create such a value.

17th April 1900. The colour change of the ½d vermilion to green is effected to conform to the UPU colour scheme.

11th July 1900. The 1/- stamp is changed to a bicoloured design to avoid confusion with the new ½d value.

22nd January 1901. Queen Victoria dies. The Jubilee issue is replaced over time by the Edward VII issue. A combination of the popularity of the Jubilee designs and the desire of the authorities to save money results in eight of the Jubilee designs being adopted by the Edward issue with only minor changes.

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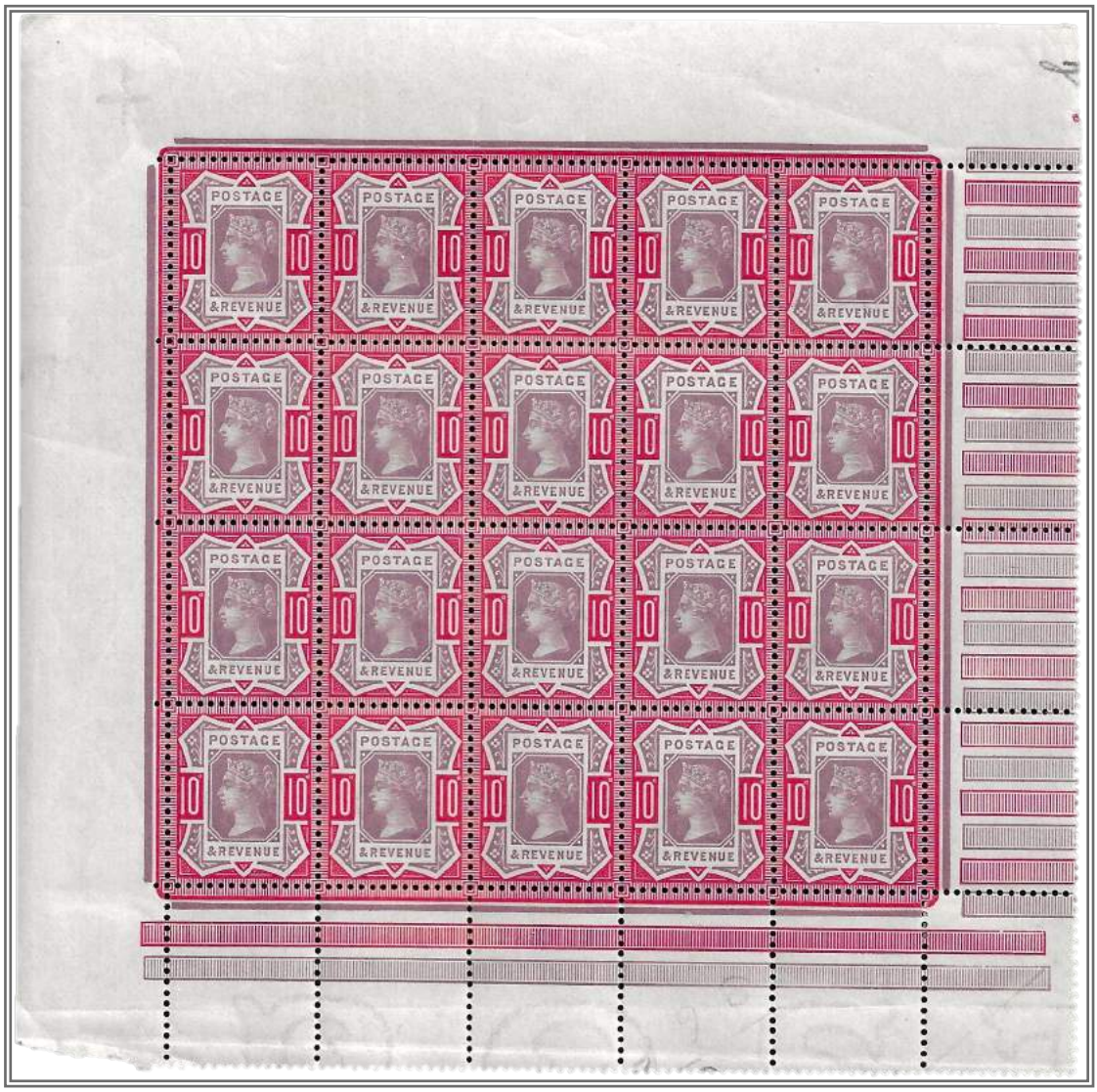


*Back cover illustrations:*

*Above :* 10d pane 'A' setting 2 from the left-hand side of the mill sheet and showing pinning point and margin watermarks – see *Laydown 2 Frame 3*.

*Back cover:* a half sheet of 4d with interpanneau top margin from the 160-set printing of December 1899 to 1902. From the right-hand side of the mill sheet and showing pinning points and margin watermarks – see *Laydown 1 Frame 11*.

