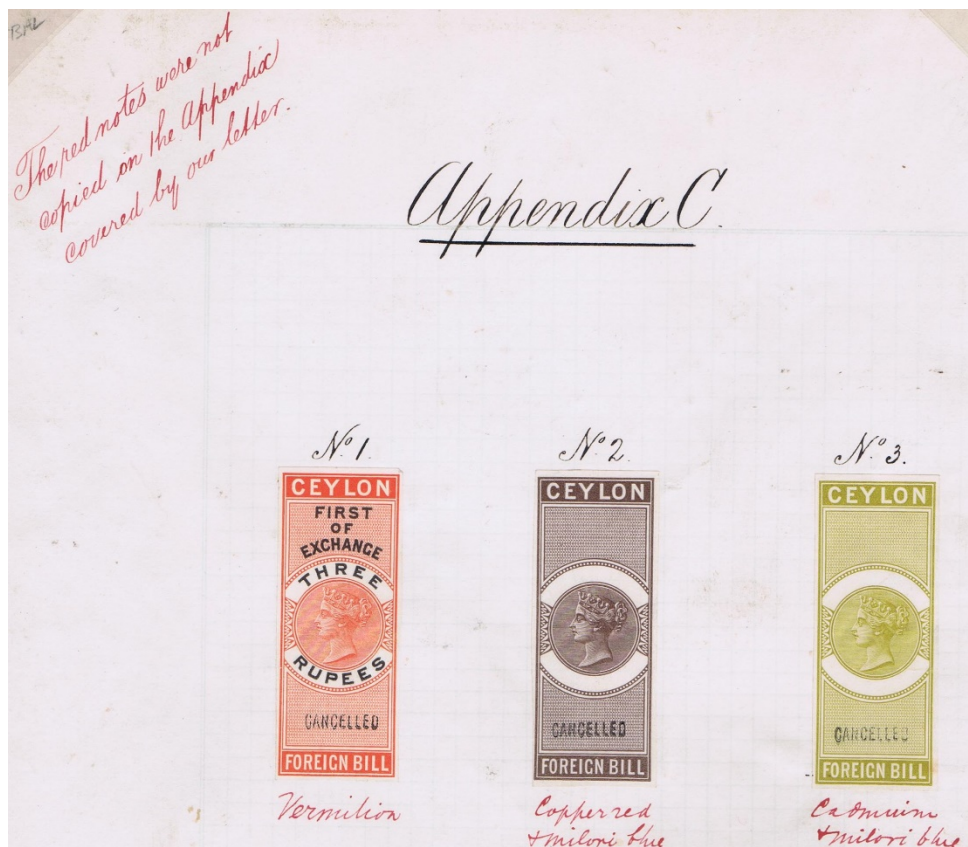




The Royal Philatelic Society London

Foreign Bill and Telegraph Stamps of Ceylon

A Presentation by
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President



5.00pm Thursday 13th January 2022

Foreign Bills and Telegraph Stamps of Ceylon.

Note: The Country CEYLON was renamed in 1972 when the REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA was established. The stamps under discussion were all issued in Ceylon and predate the new name by decades, thus, in this document the term Ceylon is used throughout.

INTRODUCTION

The philatelic history of Ceylon is widely known and deeply studied and up until the First World War the fiscal stamps were included in that early interest. Since then the Perkins Bacon issues have tended to take precedence for study over later issues of De La Rue, and indeed the early Foreign Bill Stamps have very recently had significant study and publication in *Ceylon The Pence Issues RPSL 2020*.

Fiscal and Telegraph stamps considerably out number Postage stamps but serve to demonstrate the intricacies and interest in the two great printers.

FOREIGN BILL STAMPS

A Bill of Exchange or Foreign Bill is a three-party negotiable instrument in which the first party, the drawer, presents an order for the payment of a sum certain, on a second party, the drawee, for payment to a third party, the payee, on demand or at a fixed future date. Tax was charged at various rates depending upon the value of the bill and the number of bills in the set.



This First Bill of Exchange dated 17th October 1879 was payable at six months for £500 raised by Macgregor & Co through the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India and the Union Bank of London.

Perkins Bacon Stamps

The first mention of fiscal stamps is in the first Ordinance of 1855 relating to 'Altering and Amending stamp duties'. Subsequently an order was placed for Adhesive Foreign Bill stamps on the Agents General [predecessor of Crown Agents] and stamps designed and printed by Perkins Bacon were shipped on 6th February 1856. There were three plates of the first Schedule A stamps inscribed "*drawn out of, but negotiated in, the colony, wheresoever possible*" the first of 1d value and the other two of differing values which proved "highly inconvenient" to the Commissioner of Stamps.

The fourth plate was for Schedule B stamps inscribed "*drawn in or out, and payable out of, but negotiated in, the colony*" and containing no less than 14 different values on the one plate of 45 images.

Although supplies of all plates were printed and sent to Ceylon only stamps from the Schedule A series were used and those not until 1862, coincident with a new scale of fees introduced on 1st January of that year. No examples of schedule B (Plate 4) stamps have been seen used.

In FRAME 1 a selection of used examples of these stamps is displayed showing particularly:



- A pair of 2d from Plate 2 bottom row dated 69/6/04 [4th June 1869] and showing the poor alignment of images.
- A Two shilling with possible private perforations.
- A poor copy of the Eight Shillings but one of only three known examples. [3000 were delivered in 1856 and the count on 11 June 1867 revealed that only 72 had been used.]

Embossed Foreign Bill Stamps.

In preparation for the implementation of the rates under Ordinance XI of 1861 a new order of stamps was made complaining *inter alia* of the confusion caused by printing different values on the same sheets.

The stamps so supplied were not therefore from the existing plates or on engraved plates of any sort but were made almost certainly by De La Rue using a series of embossing dies of the Wyon Head of Victoria surrounded by two collars or arcs of value information.

Fourteen values were been found in unused are known used viz: the Examples ,of both of these 1.



requested and thirteen have condition. Only two values 1s8d, and the 3s4d. stamps are shown on Frame

This rare example of the one shilling and six pence embossed Foreign Bill stamp shows the amount of the Bill and the date which is most unusual.

Foreign Bill stamps printed by Thomas de la Rue.

On 1st January 1872 the currency was changed from Gold Standard Pounds to Silver Standard Indian Rupees, but the subdivision to annas and pies was rejected and a decimal system used: 100 cents to one Rupee.

It was normal procedure to draw Foreign Bills in sets of three or sometimes two, each being identical in value and tenor to the others. The bills were despatched overseas by different mails and ships and by having more than one copy the chances were that at least one bill would be delivered.

Although this procedure was probably followed in previous years there is only one document so far discovered with a line engraved Foreign Bill stamp attached. Likewise the confusion developed from the issuance of the two Schedules of tax did not help as one complete schedule was never issued.

After some deliberation it was finally agreed that the new stamps should be printed in groups of three and the values would follow the requirements of the duty schedule as published 23rd December 1871.



Stamps were therefore issued copying those issued by Mauritius in 1869 with FIRST, SECOND or THIRD of exchange being printed on each stamp. These were printed by De La Rue in the standard three-unit size of approximately 24 x 60 millimetres. The Queen's head was that of the second general colonial type designed and engraved by M.Joubert de la Ferte and first used in 1863. The stamps were printed by letterpress and arranged on sheets originally made for four rows of ten stamps in two panes, totalling 80 stamps. However the stamps being in threes it was necessary to print them in rows of 9 the position for the tenth stamp being occupied by an engine turned engraving the same size as one of the stamps. This resulted in sheets of 72 in two panes of 36. The watermark of CA over Crown was originally designed for stamps of two units tall [e.g. the small revenue stamps of the Straits Settlements and Malay states] so the result was a difference between stamps some having crown above CA and others with CA above the crown depending on which row the stamps came from.

The stamps were finally issued in 1874 in the following values.

The first colour noted is that of the main stamp design with the second colour noted being the value and number of EXCHANGE where it differed from the basic stamp.

5 cents Pale green and mauve

15 cents Blue and violet

10 cents Slate

30 cents Bistre- brown

45 cents Violet

60 cents Red-brown and violet

75 cents Deep blue

1 Rp 20 cents Violet and green

1 Rp 50 cents Deep green

2 Rp 25 cents Magenta

3 Rupees Orange

A small number of the One Rupee Twenty Cents value was issued with an error of colour when the green was inadvertently exchanged for mauve.



Stamp Ordinance XXIII of 1871 was repealed in 1884 by Stamp Ordinance XLIII which came into operation on 1st January 1885 changed some rates as a result of the devaluation of the Rupee. Thus for sets of Bills from Rp 500 to Rp 1000 and for every additional Rp1000 the fee was raised from 15 cents to 20 cents.

This change demanded a new 20 cents stamp and multiples thereof and caused the redundancy of several values notably the 15 cents, 45 cents and Rp2 25c.

In normal circumstances one might have assumed that a new order for stamps would have been placed on De La Rue, especially as the stamps were designed to require no change in the overall design to produce a new value, simply a new central ring around the Queen's head indicating the new value and possibly a change of colour.

The new tariff could have been supplied with minimum delay and at practically no increase in cost but as surmised by Crofton writing in 1910 "*By one of those curious lapses of intelligence for which the Ceylon stamp office of this period was about to render itself conspicuous, the new values were supplied for no less than eight years by means of surcharging the existing issue.*"

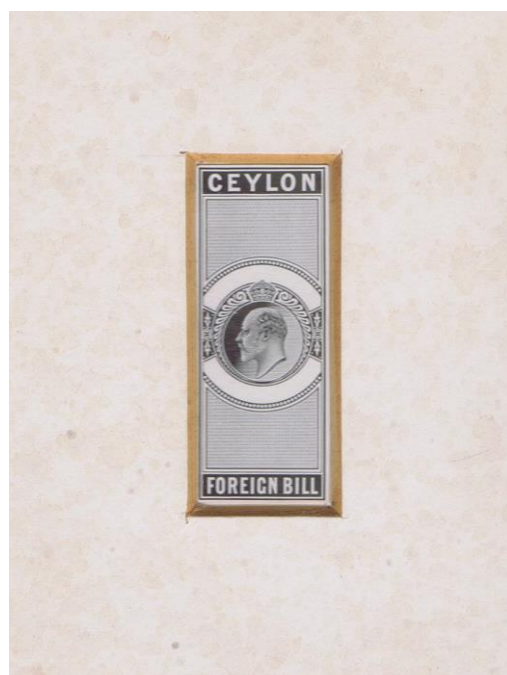
The following Table, taken from Crofton, lists the Provisionals issued and the numbers printed by the Colombo Government Printer.

DATE	20c	40c	60c	80c	Rp 1	Rp 2
16.3.1885	3000	3000		6000	2940	2940
30.7.1886	3000	3000			3000	1656
22.2.1888	3000	3000				
05.6.1889	2400	2400	1200		1200	
18.6.1890	3600	3600	3600		2400	
1891-92	3444	4608	1440	4476	3264	
12.5.1893	1800	3000		1440	1800	720
11.11.1895			600			

These figures are taken from the stock register in the Colombo Stamp Office, presumably by Crofton himself. Judging by his remarks about the ability of that office it would seem that they should not be entirely relied upon. Unlike many listings the display shows the stamps for each date of issue rather than by value or denomination. Each number represents the quantity of sets of stamps of First, Second and Third of Exchange. The total number therefore of individual stamps overprinted would be three times the numbers quoted. The total number of different stamps is 90 + 3[see below] and they are set out in the display. A very few of the 1890 issue of 40c on 1 Rp 20 cents was on the error of colour noted above, violet and mauve. They are very scarce.

Foreign Bill stamps of King Edward VII

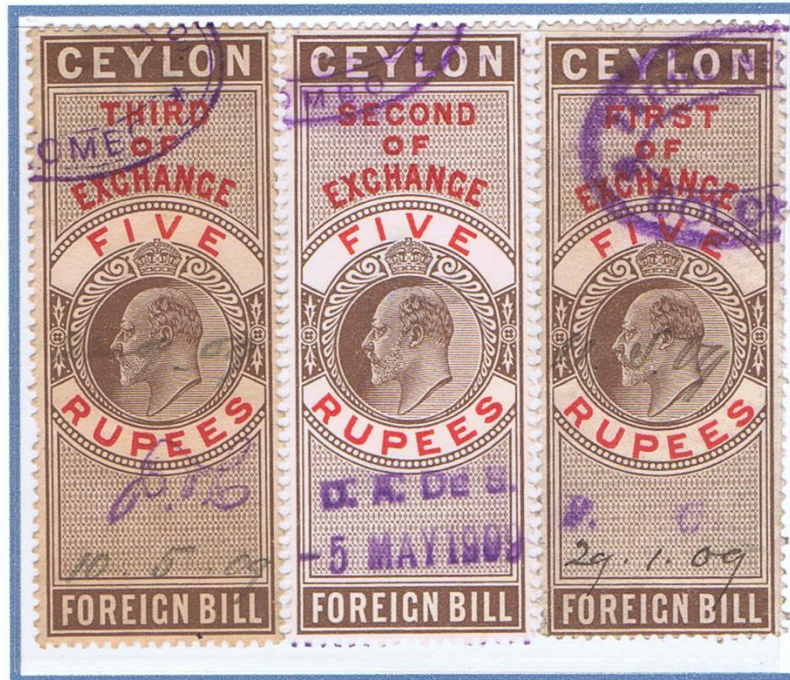
Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901 and it was several months before issues with the effigy of the new King Edward VII were ordered. The die proof is undated and it is assumed that the stamps were sent out so as to arrive in December as in previous years. The stock accounts include this issue on 29th December 1903 and the stamps would have been issued in early 1904. There were nine values on the wide style Crown CA watermarked paper. Printed by De La Rue they were similar to the Victoria stamps but the centre roundel was changed with a Crown above the monarch's head and a different pattern of surround. The numbers issued are known from data at the Colombo Stamp Office and these are found on the sheets.



Master Die Proof Edward VII
Foreign Bill

In 1905 the annual issue was printed on multiple CA watermarked paper which because of the sheet size was sideways. The same values as before were delivered along with a new 5 cents value and in 1909 a 5 Rupee value was also issued. The latter is very scarce especially the First of Exchange.

1909 Five Rupees Brown and Carmine



RECEIPT DRAFT AND ORDER STAMPS

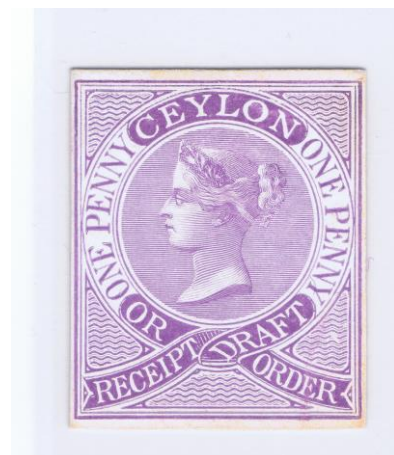
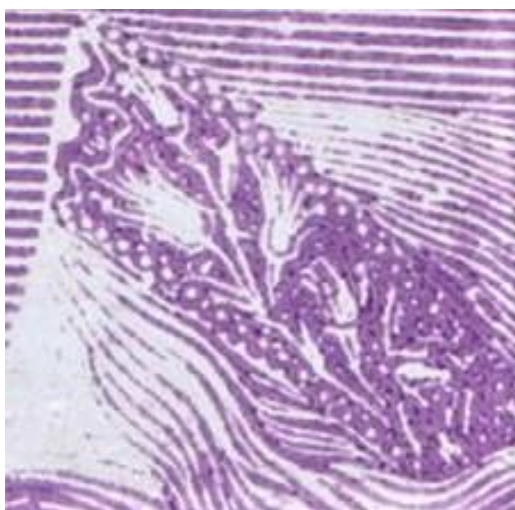
The arrangement of the plates for the Perkins Bacon issue previously described were such that a very large number of 1d stamps was printed, namely 300,000. These were intended to be used for receipts, drafts and orders to show that the duty had been paid but this was not put into effect and special stamps were ordered from De La Rue, after the 1862 ordinance, was published. The order from DLR was delayed and the company advised that a much quicker delivery could be produced if the existing stock of 1857 imperforate ½d postage stamps and, a few months later, the Perkins Bacon One Penny Postage Stamps on Star paper were overprinted .



De La Rue supplied the order for definitive Receipt Stamps around mid-1862 using a size and design reminiscent of a similar stamp for the British Inland Revenue stamp. This stamp along with the half penny postage stamp were printed from a Queen's

Head die unique to Ceylon with a special manifestation of the diadem using a floral spray design.

This design is beautifully depicted on the Die Proof in Black on glazed card along with another in violet.



Initial supplies of the one penny receipt stamp were printed on unwatermarked paper perforated at Somerset House 15 ½ x 15 . The examples here show the poor quality of the alignment of stamps perforated there. In about 1864 stamps were printed on Crown CC watermarked paper upright on each stamp. These stamps too were perforated at Somerset House 15 ½ x 15 the colour of the stamps being darker and sometimes of a reddish hue.



In 1872 De La Rue supplied new decimal currency stamps of a new design but on the same paper though not until 1st October 1872 were the one penny stamps finally disallowed. Until 1879 stamps were perforated at Somerset House. Single line perforations occur of gauge 12 ½ and 14 on stamps with upright CC watermark during the move to perforating in house at De La Rue.

Some stamps printed on sideways watermarked paper were perforated 15 ½ x 15 . These however were not part of the 1881 sideways printings, see seq. but prints on the original layout of 12 x 20 multiples cut the wrong way in error and perforated with the earlier printings of 1872-78.

In 1881 the 12 x 20 plates were remade into De La Rue's standard format of 2 panes of 8 x 7 each. This necessitated the Crown CC paper being used with the watermark sideways. These stamps are invariably perforated 14 on DLR's own machines.

These stamps were withdrawn from 31st December 1884 and replaced at least temporarily by remainder postage stamps overprinted Five Cents "Postage and Revenue" .

TELEGRAPH STAMPS

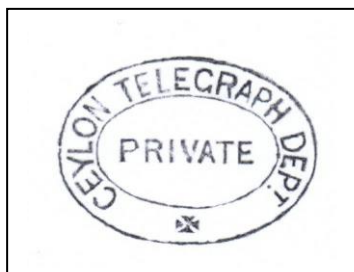
The invention of the Electric Telegraph and in particular the system devised by Samuel Morse in 1838 had an impact on communications quite as dramatic as the internet system with which we are nearly all familiar.

Ceylon was connected to India by Telegraph in 1858, three years before the telegraph cross the United States of America in 1861.

In 1862 it was confirmed in writing that the Ceylon Telegraph Department was under the control of the Government of India and that the Electric Telegraph stamps that were issued in India in 1860 were used in Ceylon. Only three copies of this stamp series are currently known, all discovered since Crofton reported in 1910 that "*no copies with Ceylon cancellations are known.*"

The cancellation is a double oval with the words CEYLON TELEGRAPH DEPT in the upper part of the arc and PRIVATE across the middle distinguishing it from SERVICE

was



which
used for
official

telegrams but has not been found on any stamps.

One of those three copies is displayed on the 1 Rupee as are the other two.

Indian Telegraph Stamps used in Ceylon

From its inception in c.1862 the Telegraph Department of Ceylon was entirely run by Indian trained personnel and used Indian equipment. Sometime before b1868 control went back to the Ceylon Government as Ceylon was asked to join the International Telegraph Union which at their Vienna convention promptly insisted upon a reduction in fees from RP50 to Rp 28 ½ thus causing financial loss to the Ceylon Department which agreed with India to again take over the system and the use of Indian Telegraph Stamps first issued on 1st February 1869 was universal in India and Ceylon. This arrangement lasted until the end of June 1880.

The only way therefore to prove the use of Indian stamps in Ceylon is by interpreting the cancellations which took the form of a straight line office name followed by a date in large sans-serif letters. Owing to the narrow nature of the Telegraph stamps it is

usual to find just three or four letters of the name on a stamp and it is to be borne in mind that there are several offices which can confuse the casual observer and result in the stamp being assumed to be used in Ceylon when in fact it was not. Examples may be found from the letters OMB which occur in Colombo but also Bombay, GAL or ALL which may be from Galle but also from Indian offices in Bangalore, Allahabad or Alleppey, and doubtless others too.

INDIA TELEGRAPHS USED IN CEYLON

Indian adhesive telegraph stamps were in use throughout Ceylon from 1st February 1869. These may be recognised only by the name of the cancelling office. According to the Philatelic Society of India's handbook on the *Postage and Telegraph Stamps of British India* the best known offices are Colombo, Kandy, Jaffna and Galle.



THE ONE ANNA stamp was not issued until 1878 and is rarely found with Ceylon Cancel. SG states that there is a pair of the 1a yellow-green in the Tapling Collection but declines to list it. **This is the second pair found, also used at Colombo..**

THE TWO ANNAS



TRINCOLMALEE 7-5-77



KANDY



ANURADHAPURA 30 1 77 IN MANUSCRIPT [EXCEPTIONALLY SCARCE IN THIS CONDITION]



COLOMBO 27 5 78

The rates paid for telegrams during this period were equivalents in Ceylon Currency of the Indian currency rates for telegrams.



NEWARAEIYA

Examples of the Indian issue of 1869-79 are shown in mint, specimen and cancelled condition as well as many used stamps cancelled with one or other of the Ceylon offices known to have used them.

The known list of cancellations is displayed here **by kind permission of Stanley Gibbons** who have granted permission for their scheme to be reproduced.

There are 32 straight-line cancels from just 14 offices. PANADURE, [PANADURA] which is listed as one of the offices in Part 1 is not thought to have used such a cancel and cannot be found on Indian stamps.



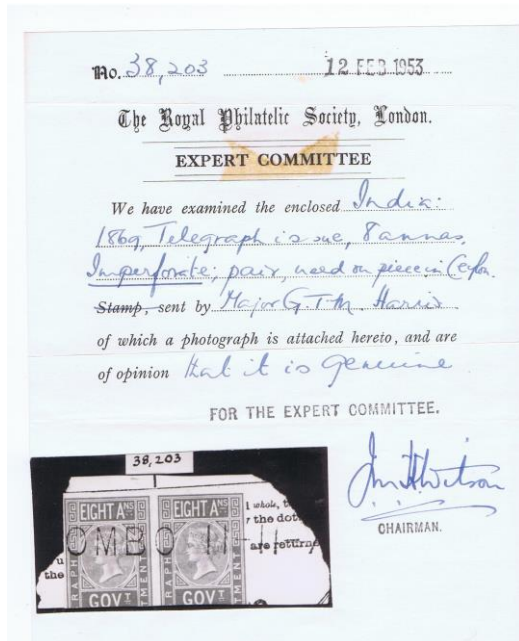
The following values of the Indian Issue with Crown and INDIA watermark are found used in Ceylon:

- 1 anna, yellow - green *[Not listed by SG though a note says that a pair is in the Tapling Collection]*
- 2 annas , maroon
- 4 annas, pale blue
- 8 annas, brown *[Imperf examples of this stamp exist and were only used in Ceylon]*
- 1 rupee, Type I and II, grey
- 2 rupees 8 annas Type I and II, orange
- 5 rupees, orange-brown
- 10 rupees type I and II, green
- 14 rupees 4 annas, lilac
- 25 rupees type I and II, violet
- 28 rupees 8 annas, yellow-green
- 50 rupees type I and II ,rose

Examples of all of these stamps used in Ceylon are displayed but for the Die II of the 50 Rupees which has not been seen.

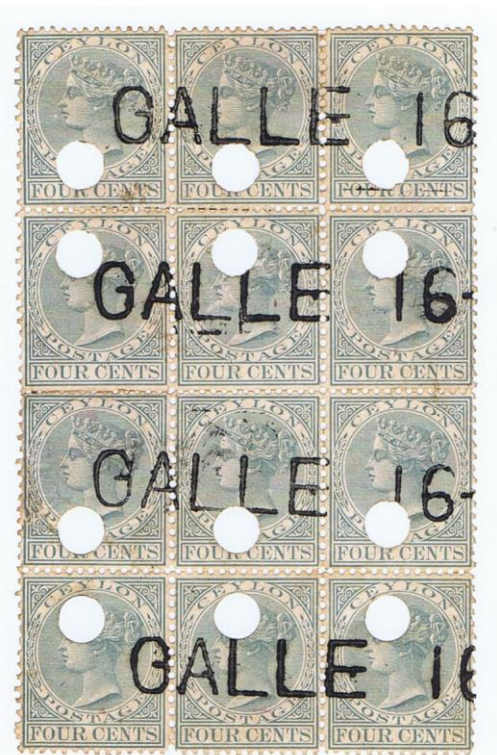
The pair of 1 annas is only the second sighting of this stamp recorded used in Ceylon the other being in the Tapling Collection at the British Museum.

There is a pair of the 8 annas imperf displayed. This is cancelled, as are all known copies, at Colombo.



Use of Postage stamps for Telegraphs.

The use of Indian Telegraph stamps was permitted in Ceylon from 1st February 1869 but they were entirely used up when the Ceylon overprints were brought onto stock on 21st June 1880. Towards the end of the Indian period some postage stamps were used especially in Galle.



A rare block of twelve of the 1872-80 4 cents grey perf 14 x 12 ½ used at Galle telegraph office in c. 1880.

The stamp is quite scarce and is rarely found in unused condition.

Perhaps most were used for Telegrams?

CEYLON Overprints

The Ceylon Government Gazette of 25th June 1880 stated *inter alia* :

"The rate for telegrams between any two stations in Ceylon is one rupee for twenty words and fifty cents for each additional ten words or less....."

(Until the Ceylon Telegraph Stamps are received from England the rates will be recovered in Rupees and Annas.....to suit the Indian stamps which will be used) "

The stamps which will be used were the stocks of Indian stamps at Colombo which were overprinted CEYLON in a line twice in the top and lower halves of the stamp. The 25 Rupees Indian stamp used at Galle is shown right. This is the only one known in this condition.



Most CEYLON overprinted stamps are used at the same offices as the unoverprinted Indian stamps. Many of the cancellations are exactly the same and derived from the same hand stamps.

In 1881 during the period of use of these stamps a temporary Telegraph and Post Office was established at Silavaturai on the North coast of Ceylon for the purposes of collecting Oysters for Pearls.

An example of the Pearl Fishery manuscript cancellation used on 21st April 1881 in red ink. The stamps 2Rp.50c would have paid for a telegram of 40-50 words inland or to India.



Messrs Stanley Gibbons, in their auction catalogue of 6th October 2020, wrote an excellent commentary on the origin of the Pearl Fishery cancels and with their kind permission I reproduce it here :

The Ceylon pearl fishery of the Gulf of Mannar was one of the most tightly regulated fisheries ever to have been operated, with a remarkably well-documented history that goes back to well before the time of Christ. It has even been suggested that the oyster beds or "Paars" of Mannar may well have been where the appreciation of pearls as "gems" first began in pre-historic times. By the time the British came to control the fishery in 1796 it was operated according to the then-current practice of leasing it out to private entrepreneurs. However, in 1833 it was decided that the British would operate the fishery themselves , as the Portuguese had done in the 16th century; a practice that continued until 1907, in

which season it was again fished by a tenant, namely the Ceylon Company of Pearl Fishers Ltd. The company went bankrupt a few years later and the fishery was abandoned.

There are numerous colourful contemporary accounts as to how the fishery worked. Divers were carried to the sea bed by a stone on a line. They gathered the oysters into a bag by hand and were then pulled to the surface via the weighted line. Divers made many dives in a morning and could stay under for prodigious lengths of time. They were very worried by the danger of shark attacks and two shark-charmers, which Marco Polo recorded as working in the fishery as long ago as the 13th century, were employed by the Government to ply their ancient craft, though this ceased in 1885. It was reported that the charmers would drink a great deal of toddy and by the end of the day were often completely inebriated. On a boat landing its catch, the oysters were divided into three piles and an official would select two of these as the Government's share, the remaining third being that of the divers. They were then auctioned off unopened so that there was a heavy element of gambling involved. The shellfish were either opened fresh or else they were placed in wooden troughs in sheds or buried in the sand and allowed to decay in the heat for ten days before the pearls were recovered by hand. It is reported that the resulting odour was repulsively foul and all-pervasive in the vicinity of the seasonal pearl town.

The fishery was only successful in certain years when it could take place on a huge scale. Indeed, between 1796 and 1907, pearls were only harvested in 53 years and the fishery was only judged successful in 11 of those seasons. The season of 1881 was one such, when the fishery was open for 47 days between 4th March and 27th April, excluding Sundays. In total 27,338,596 oysters were landed. The Government's share consisted of 18,225,731 oysters or two thirds of the catch, raising revenue of Rps 598,688. The weather that year was unusually fine and it was reported that, if the Roman Catholic pearl divers had been prepared to work on Good Friday, the 14th April, which they flatly refused to do, the catch would have been even greater. In 1881 the fishery was carried out from a temporary township at Silavaturai, on the coast just south of Manaar. A temporary Telegraph and Post Office was set up as both the number of people involved and the scale on which financial transactions took place necessitated the best available communication with the outside world. Although a post office was again established in 1887, the next year in which the fishery was successful, there was no telegraph office and messages were taken to Manaar for transmission at night when the lines were quiet. The 1881 telegraph at Silavaturai was thus a one off event.

We have seen telegraph stamps cancelled at the Pearl Fishery between 25th February and 3rd May 1881. The earliest is a unique 1Rp cancelled on 25th Feb 1881 bearing a Proud Type PD1 CDS and is the earliest known use of a CDS on any telegraph stamp of Ceylon.

It seems that this CDS was for some reason thereafter reserved for use on postage stamps and all subsequent 1881 Pearl Fishery cancellations we have seen, which are dated between 30th March and 3rd May bear a clear manuscript cancellation in red ink, invariably in the same hand, which reads "Pearl Fishery" followed by the date written out in full: for example "10th April 1881". These cancellations are predominantly known on the 1880 issue bearing CEYLON overprint.

In 1889 the fishery headquarters moved from Silavaturai, it was at Dutch Bay in 1889 and at Marichchukkaddai from 1903, where it remained until the fishery was abandoned. Proud records the use of Type D2 postal cancellations in March and April 1903 but we have seen no telegraphic cancellations from that year. However a number of bisected telegraph stamps cancelled with Proud type D3 CDSs for 1904, '05 and '06 are offered here [at the auction]. These were the last three years in which the British ran the fishery before leasing it out. They were very successful indeed and 1905 was said to be the greatest pearl fishery in modern times, where the Government derived revenue at that time equivalent to £ 251,073.

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The Ceylon Permanent issue

The procedure for charging a telegram was developed in India and followed in Ceylon. The stamp whose value represented the receipt for payment was placed on the telegraph form over a line joining the receipt part at the top from the message part below. Thus the stamps need to be of long dimensions and in order not to cut the monarch's head in two on a regular basis the stamps were designed with two effigies one remaining on the top half which was given to the sender and the other on the message part which, having been dispatched, was checked kept for a short while, pending any queries, and then destroyed.

This process accounts for the very large number of top halves and far fewer bottom halves that can be amassed. Even more unusual are whole stamps which have not been severed perhaps because they were placed horizontal at the end of a row or simply escapes.

The design therefore of the Ceylon series took much of its success from the Indian predecessors and 12 values were released on 14th February 1881. The Queen's Head was from the general Colonial die and the artist's work is such that the beauty of these stamps had considerable influence on attracting the writer to this series.



The designs were not just attractive but performed their duty most adequately apart from three values, the Twenty-five cents, the One rupee, and the Ten rupees which had the value shown only in the middle of the stamp. As explained above this was unsatisfactory for, after bisection, either half was liable not to show the value at all.

To remedy this situation new designs were ordered with the values conspicuously at both ends.

One of the artist's essays is displayed here, the first time it has been available for viewing since it left the De La Rue archive more than 60 years ago.



The new stamps were most likely issued in March 1882 and along with the others were used until 1894 when a delivery was made with the changed watermark of the wider CA.

The values of the stamps were not however changed to meet the requirements of the rates for telegrams which inevitably were changed from time to time. The first change was made relatively soon after the issue was released for in December 1881 telegraph messages for India were changed to the rate of twenty cents per word from 1st January 1882.

This naturally enough caused a demand for values of twenty, forty, sixty and eighty cents, none of which existed in the current series. However, instead of ordering new stamps of the appropriate values the Ceylon Government Printer once again as with Foreign Bills, was asked to overprint the existing stocks to fill the gap. What is even more surprising and verging on the absurd is that they continued to surcharge stamps for no less than ten years. In some cases this resulted in stamps of the correct and required value being overprinted with new values so often that in due time those values ran out and stamps of other denominations had to be surcharged back to the values of stamps which had been in stock but which had now been surcharged to another value.

The study of the overprints of Ceylon stamps in all areas, postage, revenue, Foreign Bills and Telegraphs is probably the most complex and philatelically inviting to be found.

Certainly the display today shows a mere overview of the complexities to be discovered and there are of course mistakes, producing rarities, which are much sought after. Suffice it to say it makes the Telegraphs of Ceylon a rich pasture for the discerning philatelist.

Telegraph Provisionals

One of the more interesting provisionals is the overprint on 25 cents Stamp Duty stamp which was over printed in vertical pairs with TELE on the top stamp and GRAPH on the lower one. These could be affixed across the form as previously described. To date no genuine TELE stamp has been found although a few GRAPH ones exist from the



The first of the telegraph surcharged stamps was printed 23rd December 1881 and issued on 1st January the following year. Thereafter there were issues every year until 1894 as and when stamps ran out and different values were printed at different intervals.



In the frames today I have displayed these issues in value order with a note of the date of issue and the number printed. There are quite a few errors and varieties including inverted watermarks, odd shaped letters and figures from different fonts at the printing works, inverted overprints, double overprints, printings in red rather than black, and some of considerable rarity.



There are some used at smaller and otherwise insignificant offices, and some which I have managed to find still attached to their receipt part of the telegraph form, but these are not common.



This Telegraph form receipt is unusual in that it has stamps on both the front and the back of the form.



The type-set issues 1892-1903

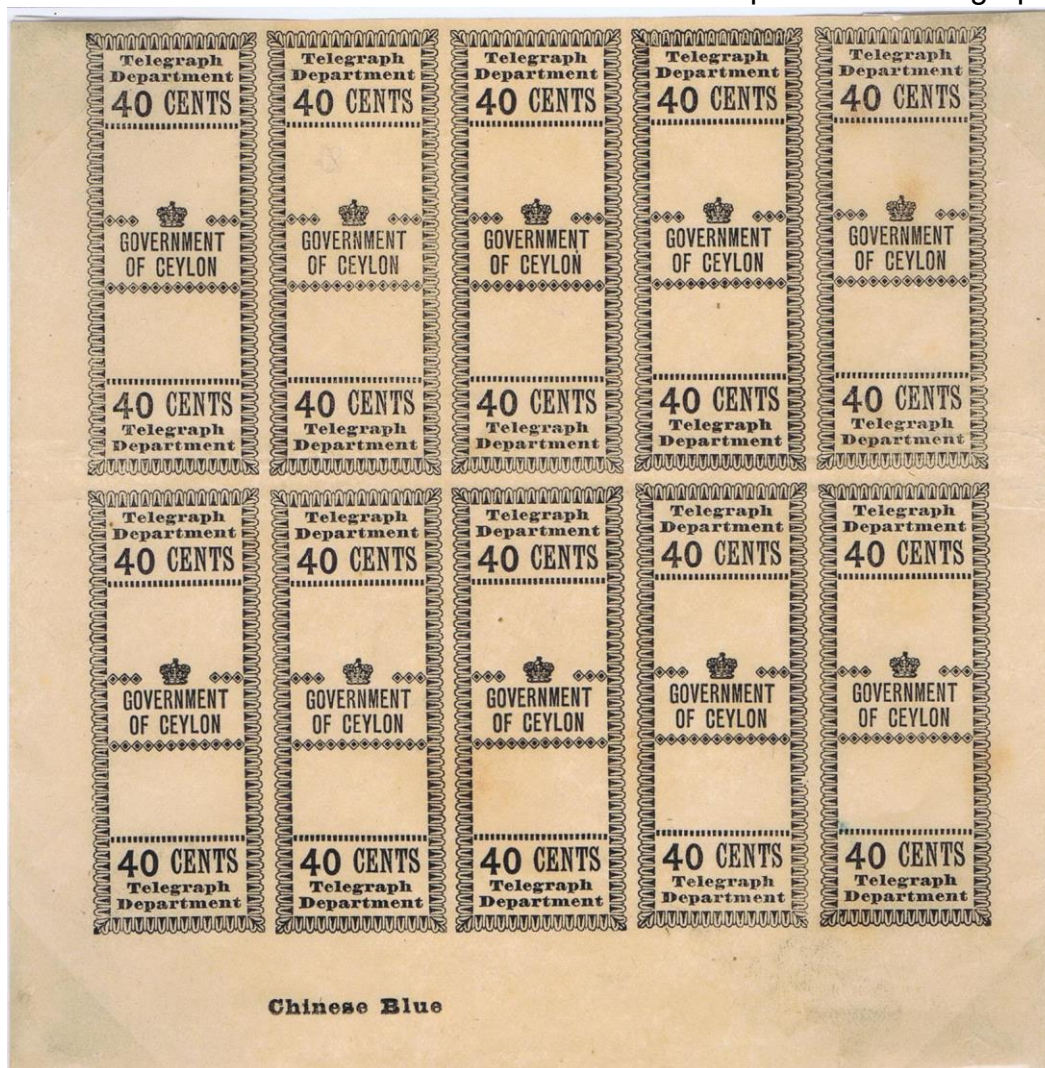
As may be obvious by now the ability of the Telegraph Office, Government Printer and indeed Commissioner of Stamps to prevaricate and produce provisional stamps is legendary.

There came a time however in 182 when the Government intervened with the Stamp Office and insisted that the constant surcharging of Telegraph stamps needed to cease and new values printed.

Perhaps surprisingly, although De La Rue was asked for some ideas, of which there are essays, no order was placed on London and the local Government Printer was asked to design and print new stamps especially for the most used values of 20, 40c, 60c and 80c.

The designs were of the appropriate size and had a crown only to replace the monarch's head, and sensibly had the value printed at both ends of the stamps so

that after bisection the value could be seen on both parts of the telegraph form.



There were initially four values and each had a different border and colour, these being Aquamarina, Chinese blue, Brown, and Olive Green. Later in 1897 five cent and ten cent stamps were printed each from two dies which can be fairly easily distinguished, and are explained on the frames.

A Telegram form from Kalmunai to Batticola 21st December 1900 25c for 8 words



All stamps had a date of issue/printing, and except the 25 Cents of 1st December 1897 a control number. Both of these vary in size and arrangement but provide a fascinating record of numbers printed and how long some of them remained in issue especially in outstation offices,

By good fortune I have amassed a virtually complete collection of these interesting though rather monotonous looking stamps, in upper half form. Like their De La Rue 'cousins' they are difficult to find whole or in unused condition. In later years [1903] the stamps were often cancelled with a punch hole rather than being severed in twain, and therefore whole stamps are more easily obtained. A few proofs have escaped the printing works.

De La Rue Telegraphs New Paper 1894

In 1894 an entirely new set of nine telegraph stamps were issued printed from the old plates but on new paper with CA in wide and more highly visible letters. From Hiscocks collection I am able to show the three high values cancelled in manuscript. These are unique.



As the use of Telegrams increased then more offices were opened and some cancellations on this issue present an interesting study, many are no longer straight line cancels but single and double circle post marks often used doubling up as telegraph cancels.

Queen Victoria's death, as already written up for the Foreign Bill stamps, necessitated a new issue with the Kings head. The undenominated Master Die proof is dated April 8 1903, this was used for all the values except the 25 cents which die proof was dated April 20 1903.



The first issue with Edward VII head was printed on wide CA paper similar to the ultimate issue of Queen Victoria. All the values that had the Queen's head were included in the set as well as the Type-Set values. The only exception being the substitution of the 80 cents with a 75 cent stamp.



A receipt for a FOREIGN TELEGRAM – Post Office Form B 8 - Paid 7 Rupees 80c including the 75cents

In 1905 the whole set of values was reprinted on to standard multiple CA paper, but owing to the shape of the plates the watermark occurs sideways. There was also a change in policy with regard to receipts for telegrams which resulted in many more full stamps being kept as they were cancelled with postmarks and often with punched holes.

During the last few months of telegraph issues the Stamp Office reverted to type and managed to squeeze in a few surcharged stamps. In May 1910 [see below] twelve cents stamps were overprinted in five denominations , 20 cents, 40 cents, 60 cents, 5 Rupees and 10 Rupees. In July the twenty five cents was surcharged twenty cents, and the one Rupee, forty cents and 5 rupees.

None of these stamps it seems were used as none have survived in that state. Mint stamps were not supposed to have been sold to the public but a few escaped, some of which are now highly priced.



On the 1st August 1910 postage stamps were brought into use for telegraphs and separate *Telegraph Stamps* were abolished.

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