

The Royal Philatelic Society London

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PRESS RELEASE

A scientific approach to the £5 orange

One of the most iconic of British stamps, the Queen Victoria £5 orange, formed the basis of the display and presentation by Dr John Horsey to The Royal Philatelic Society London on 1 October.

The stamp started life as a receipt for the cost of sending a telegram: many sent overseas cost in excess of £5, and there was insufficient space on the forms for a combination of lower denomination 'Telegraph' stamps. The use of such stamps ended on 31 October 1881, after which 'postage' stamps were used instead.

Thus there became a need for a £5 'Postage' stamp, issued on 21 March 1882. The word 'Telegraph' was removed from the earlier printing plate, and sheets printed without such inscription. As a separate operation, but in the same colour, a new plate added the word 'Postage' to each stamp.

Dr Horsey's presentation took a scientific look at the printings of the stamp and the shades and papers involved, plus an analysis of the usage of the stamp. He also demonstrated fraudulent use of the stamp, such as bleaching out an Exchequer cancel to reuse the stamp postally, or carefully applying the postmark over a 'SPECIMEN' overprint.

Those wishing to visit The Royal Philatelic Society London at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY, or be a guest at one of its meetings, are asked to contact in advance the Administrative Office on 020 7486 1044.



Frank Walton (right), President of The Royal Philatelic Society London thanks Dr John Horsey for his display and presentation.

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