

The £5 Orange

The display covers the life of the Great Britain Five Pound Orange. It includes die proofs, colour trials, specimens, issued stamps, the IR Officials, its interaction with Unification and the varieties that developed as the plate suffered progressive deterioration. These varieties have received little attention in the past. Those shown result from extensive personal research conducted over several years.

The £5 Orange was introduced in 1877 as a Telegraphs stamp for payment of bulk telegrams and those of individual high cost. In October 1881, all Telegraphs stamps were withdrawn and postage stamps used instead. The Telegraphs plate was adapted for the £5 Postage in 1882. Basically, the word TELEGRAPHS was replaced by POSTAGE.

Although nominally a postage stamp, there was no postal necessity for it. It was created to avoid the anomaly of leaving the £5 as the only remaining Telegraphs value. As a postage stamp, it was not limited to telegraphic use and available for other purposes such as internal accounting for payments received for bulk mail. Genuine postal use is scarce.

Apart from a change from blued to white paper, there were no major developments until preparations for the King Edward VII equivalent in 1902. Being an iconic stamp, it has been the target of many forgers. Examples of their efforts are shown.

Outline:

- The £5 Telegraphs – introduction and die proofs..... Pages 1 to 10
- – plate considerations and colour trials..... Pages 11 to 24
- – specimens and issued stamps..... Pages 25 to 32
- The £5 Postage stamp and its specimen overprints Pages 33 to 41
- – shades and cancellations..... Pages 42 to 47
- – fraudulent and genuine usage Pages 48 to 52
- – the plate varieties..... Pages 53 to 62
- The £5 IR Officials Pages 63 to 64
- Unification Pages 65 to 71
- Forgeries..... Pages 72 to 78
- The £5 King Edward VII..... Pages 79 to 80

At the author's instigation, two of the plate varieties shown are now included in the Stanley Gibbons Queen Victoria Specialised Catalogue, the illustrations in which are from examples in this display.

All known essays for the £5 Telegraphs are in institution collections. The fourth essay, the closest to the issued stamp, is in the Royal Philatelic Collection and is reproduced here with the gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen to whom copyright belongs.



References:

- Personal research using The Royal Philatelic Collection, The National Archives, The British Library, National Postal Museum & Archive, the De La Rue Archives and the analysis of over 3500 £5 Oranges (mostly as images) gleaned from Harmer's archives and hundreds of sale catalogues from dozens of auction houses.
- Horsey, Dr. John: *The £5 Orange*, published by Stanley Gibbons 2013, ISBN-13: 978-0-85259-902-0.
- Langmead, Peter & Huggins, Alan: *The Telegraphs Stamps and Stationery of Great Britain 1851-1954*, published by the GBPS, ISBN 0-907630-14-6.
- Samuel, Marcus & Huggins, Alan: *Specimen Stamps and Stationery of Great Britain*, published by the GBPS 1980.
- Stanley Gibbons: *Great Britain Specialised Catalogue Volume 1 – Queen Victoria 2008*.
- Wiseman, W A: *The De La Rue Years 1878-1910, Volume 1*, published by Bridger & Kay 1984, ISBN 0-902784-06-4.
- Wiseman, W A: *The De La Rue Years 1878-1910, Volume 2*, published by Stanley Gibbons 1990, ISBN 0-85259-254-X.
- Wright and Creeke: *A History of the Adhesive Stamps of the British Isles*, published by The Philatelic Society 1899.

The Need for a £5 Value

The Postmaster General was informed on 10th March 1876 of a telegram that had cost £32.2s.0d. It required 130 stamps (128×5s and 2×1s). That number would not fit on the form and was equivalent in area to 6½ panes of 20 of the 5s. This prompted action and within two weeks, the Postmaster General approved preparation of a £5 stamp.



The block of eight 5s Telegraphs stamps above has been digitally replicated and reduced to illustrate the space taken by a block of 20 (£5 in 5s stamps) relative to a £5 stamp shown digitally added to the block. The block would occupy most of the space on a standard telegram form 141x212mm. In contrast, a single £5 stamp takes one tenth of the area and the payment for even a £30 telegram would fit with ease.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

Based on the essay illustrated on Page 1, a die was prepared by De La Rue. The example below is one of a series of die proofs dated between the 8th and 17th November 1876. All those at full-size are in black on white card 92×60mm. The corner squares are blank.



Stanley Gibbons list 10 different proofs as tabulated below.

Date	Inscription	Notes
8 Nov. 76.		Dark background around head
8 Nov. 76.		Endorsed 'Postage' in pencil
9 Nov. 76.		
10 Nov. 76.		
14 Nov. 76.		
15 Nov. 76.		
16 Nov. 76.		
17 Nov. 76.		
17 Nov. 76.	BEFORE HARDENING	
undated		Basic Die Proof

Between 1 and 8 copies of each are recorded.

Pages 4 – 9 show examples of each type and explain the differences between them. The first entry with the dark background is not included as the only recorded copy is held by the British Library.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

The die was refined over several days to produce the final state from which the printing plate could be derived.



November 8th, endorsed 'Postage' in pencil

The annotation was probably added to an existing proof of that date when the £5 Postage was being considered.

The only example recorded



November 8th

November 9th



November 9th

This is similar to the 8th but without dark areas at the intersections of the circular frame with the horizontal frames. It has a scratch through the ear to the back of the hair.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

The November 9th proof on the previous page has small jewels whereas the November 10th proof below has large jewels. The head has been replaced. The scratch across the ear is the likely reason.



November 9th

November 10th



November 10th



November 10th

November 14th



November 14th

The lip is made more pouted by reducing the dark triangle under the lip.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

Uniqueness of Proofs

Eight examples are recorded dated November 15th. Each can be distinguished by the position of the dates relative to the stamp image as shown for two examples below. A vertical line from the corner of the stamp design intersects the '5' in the upper proof and the 'o' of 'Nov' in the other. Several copies of this date were needed as they are believed to have been circulated for review.

Nov 15, 1876.



Nov 15, 1876.

Nov 15, 1876.

Upper proof

Lower proof

Nov 15, 1876.



November 15th

These proofs tend to have a crazed surface.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

Two States of November 16^m

It is generally assumed that if proofs have the same date, then they are duplicates. This is not always the case.



Early state

Late state

The lower line in the frontal cross of the diadem slopes downwards but is nearer to horizontal in the later state. The first of the lower row of pearls is joined to the background line; in the later state, this line is removed. While minor, these aspects are crucial in dating the 'undated' proofs.



All subsequent proofs are in the later state.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

There are changes in some shading lines from the 16th, such as the lightening of the band across the hair. However, there are no significant differences in design between the two November 17th proofs.



November 17th

One of two known in private hands



November 17th endorsed 'Before Hardening'

One of two known in private hands

Hardening is a heat process whereby the die is transformed from soft steel, in which the engraving could still be updated, to a hard permanent state. There are no proofs endorsed 'After Hardening'.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

The Undated Full-size Die Proof One of two known in private hands

The undated full-size proofs were generally thought to be in the final state. This is not the case. They have the sloping line in the frontal cross matching the early 16th November proofs. They also have the curved lip introduced on the 14th November proofs. This dates them to between 14th and 16th November. The second 'Before Hardening' proof is shown for comparison.



Nov 10th: flat lip.

Undated: curved lip, sloping line. Nov 16th (late): flatter line.



There are no full-size proofs dated later than the 17th. Any that may have existed endorsed 'After Hardening' have been trimmed closer to the stamp image.

The Telegraphs Die Proofs

Final State Die Proofs

Cut-to-size sunken proofs from the De La Rue Archives
Two are known, one with a buff surround, the other cream.



These cut down proofs are in the final state. The frontal cross and line by pearl both match the 17th November proofs. The enlargement below shows it matches the imprimatur. The band over the hair is now much whiter than in the 16th November proofs.



Final state

Imprimatur

Although Stanley Gibbons list the piece from the De La Rue striking books, this cannot be shown. The only copy is in the Langmead Collection at the British Library. It is identical to the proofs shown above but mounted on thin card and endorsed 'Nov 23^d 56 Leads' in black and 'Dec 30.76' in red.

Making the Plate

The image from the hardened die was transferred under pressure in turn to 56 individual lead blocks. These were laid out and clamped in a matrix along with further blocks bearing marginal markings. A thin layer of copper was then deposited onto the lead surface by electrolysis. The blank side of the copper was soldered to a base plate for strength. Once cool, the whole mass could be inverted and the leads removed to reveal the copper surface bearing the images. This formed the basis of the printing plate. At this stage, the plate had blank corner squares. The corner letters and plate numbers needed to be added...

Making the Corner Letters

With line engraved stamps, the corner letters were punched into a steel plate. If a letter was too close to the edge, its square could become distorted – as seen with the 1d red from plate R15 lettered OI. With the thin soft copper plates used by De La Rue for surface printing, punching was not an option. It would have distorted the plate and rendered it unusable. A different approach was needed.



For stamps with coloured corner letters, such as the 1873 3d rose, De La Rue inserted circular letter slugs into holes drilled into the die. The 1883 9d die proof below shows the edges of three of these holes. Occasionally, traces are visible on the issued stamp as in the 1/2d lilac lettered MI above.



For stamps with white corner letters on a coloured background, like the £5 Orange, De La Rue engraved the letters directly into the final plate by hand. This resulted in letters common to different stamps being different shapes.

While De La Rue preferred not to tamper with the final plates, the diagram below shows that wide letters like an 'M' do not fit within a circle contained by the corner squares. They could not have been created from slugs in the die.



Shamrocks Watermark

Shamrocks watermark paper was used for the £5 colour trials and the issued £5 Telegraphs. This was first used for the 1865 Irish Dog Licence stamps. The block of 24, overprinted specimen shown, still has part of an archive ledger attached.



Reverse of the Dog Licence piece (reduced) and laterally inverted shows how the watermark appears from the front. The shamrocks were spaced for normal definitive-size stamps. The £5 Orange was printed sideways relative to this paper as illustrated. With its larger height, the £5 does not synchronise and each stamp has either three shamrocks or parts of six.

Colour trials were the next phase – to select the colour for the eventual stamps...

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Colour Trials in Gold

Gold was the initial colour of choice for the £5 value. While it would befit such a prestigious stamp, the high printing cost of 4d - 6d per stamp ruled out this option. One sheet of 56 (14 rows of 4) was printed, the lower half of which was overprinted Specimen type 8.



CF without Specimen

Many have defects and no more than seven fine copies exist in private hands.



DD without Specimen

Watermark sideways showing parts of six shamrocks with stems to the left.



BL Specimen type 8

The lower half of the sheet was folded and all examples from column B are creased near their right edge.



AK Specimen type 8

A scarce uncreased example

The Unique Marginal BN

Specimen type 8 showing the 15th December 1876 date of receipt at Somerset House and parts of the TELEGRAPHS inscription and 'Gold' endorsement.



The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Conventional Ink Trials

One sheet of each was printed in six further colours on paper with Shamrocks watermark sideways.



Grey-green



Slate-blue



Dull Claret



Dull Mauve



Brown-lilac



Pale Ultramarine

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Grey-green and Brown-lilac £5 Trials

These are generally consistent with those colours in other Telegraphs values.



10s Imprimator



£5 Grey-green trial



Issued 10s
Overprinted Specimen



£5 Brown-lilac – AJ
Unusually steep downward slope of the overprint.



3s Brown-lilac Colour Trial
Corner pair with the plate number and blue Duty Mark.



Brown-lilac AN-BN

This shows the Duty Mark, date of receipt at Somerset House and inscriptions. The letters MARK can be seen in the watermark. The overprint slope is normal. *The Duty Mark was applied before printing to ensure the correct paper was selected.*

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Slate-blue £5 Trials – an anomaly

These are noticeably bereft of blue and better described as slate-grey. Although the slate-blue shade varies in other values, their blue element is much more apparent.



Slate-blue



3s Imperf Colour Trial

Slate-blue on spray watermark paper overprinted Specimen type 8.



3s plate 1 Imprimitur Crown watermark paper

Langmead records only four in private hands.



10s Colour Trial in Slate-blue

Overprinted Specimen type 8.



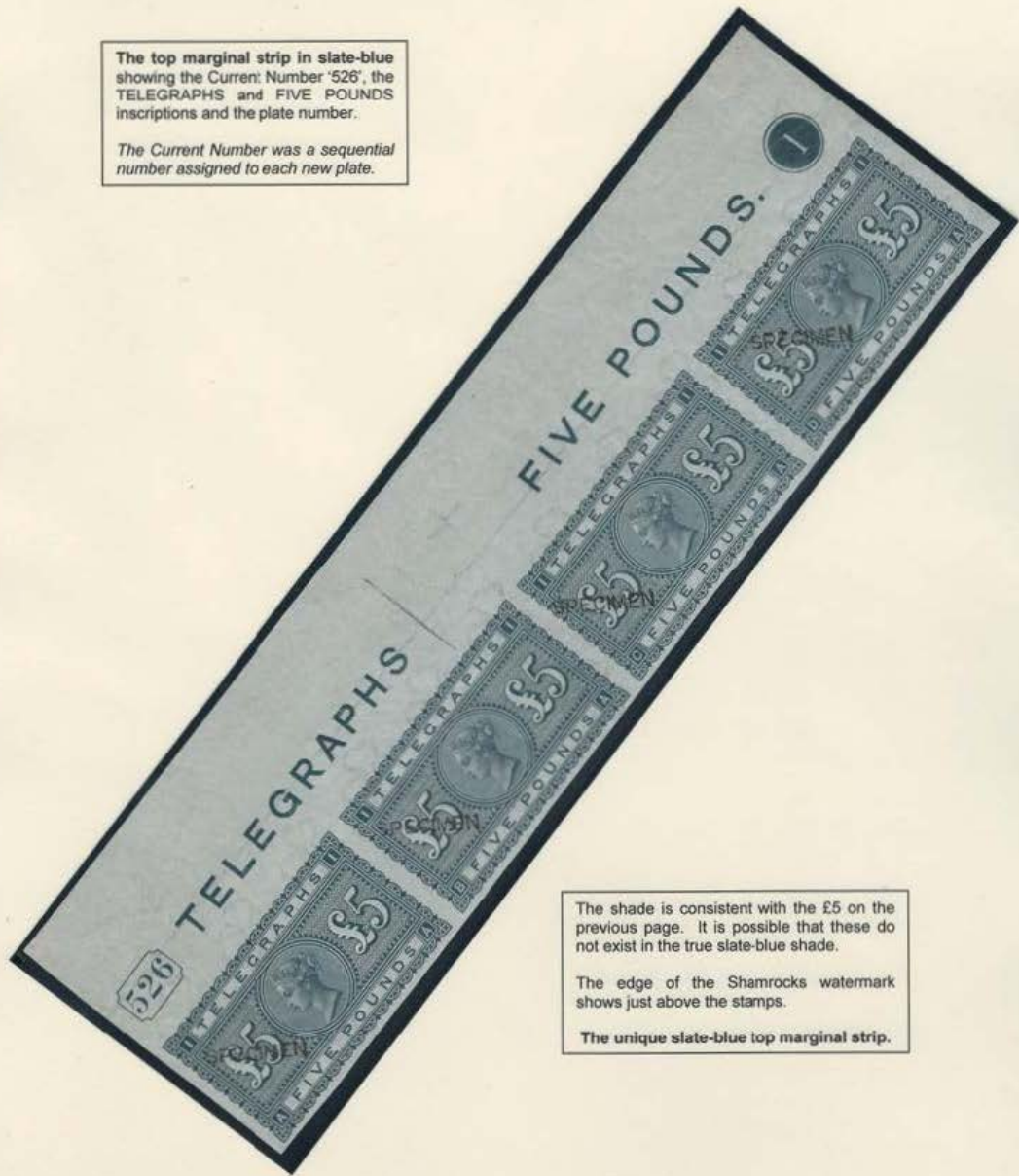
Issued 3s in Slate-blue

Showing the blue Duty Mark.

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

The top marginal strip in slate-blue showing the Current Number '526', the TELEGRAPHS and FIVE POUNDS inscriptions and the plate number.

The Current Number was a sequential number assigned to each new plate.



The shade is consistent with the £5 on the previous page. It is possible that these do not exist in the true slate-blue shade.

The edge of the Shamrocks watermark shows just above the stamps.

The unique slate-blue top marginal strip.

our Trials

ese trials.



of interest:

40°, rather than the 20° of the majority. Also BA-CA are slightly paler. It seems that the ink was their usual standards to these trials.

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Overprint Orientation

As seen in the six trials on page 14, the Specimen overprints slope upwards or downwards. This is not random. All slate-blue and lilac-brown trials slope downwards. In the grey-green, dull claret and dull mauve trials, the top ten rows slope up and the bottom four down. This can prove useful in determining the colours. It is believed that the bottom four rows were removed from each sheet and treated separately. This is seen below for the dull claret and grey-green trials.



Dull Claret CF-DG Specimen sloping up.

Although slightly different in shade, this block abuts precisely with CE-DE in the block of 20.



Dull Claret CN Specimen sloping down.

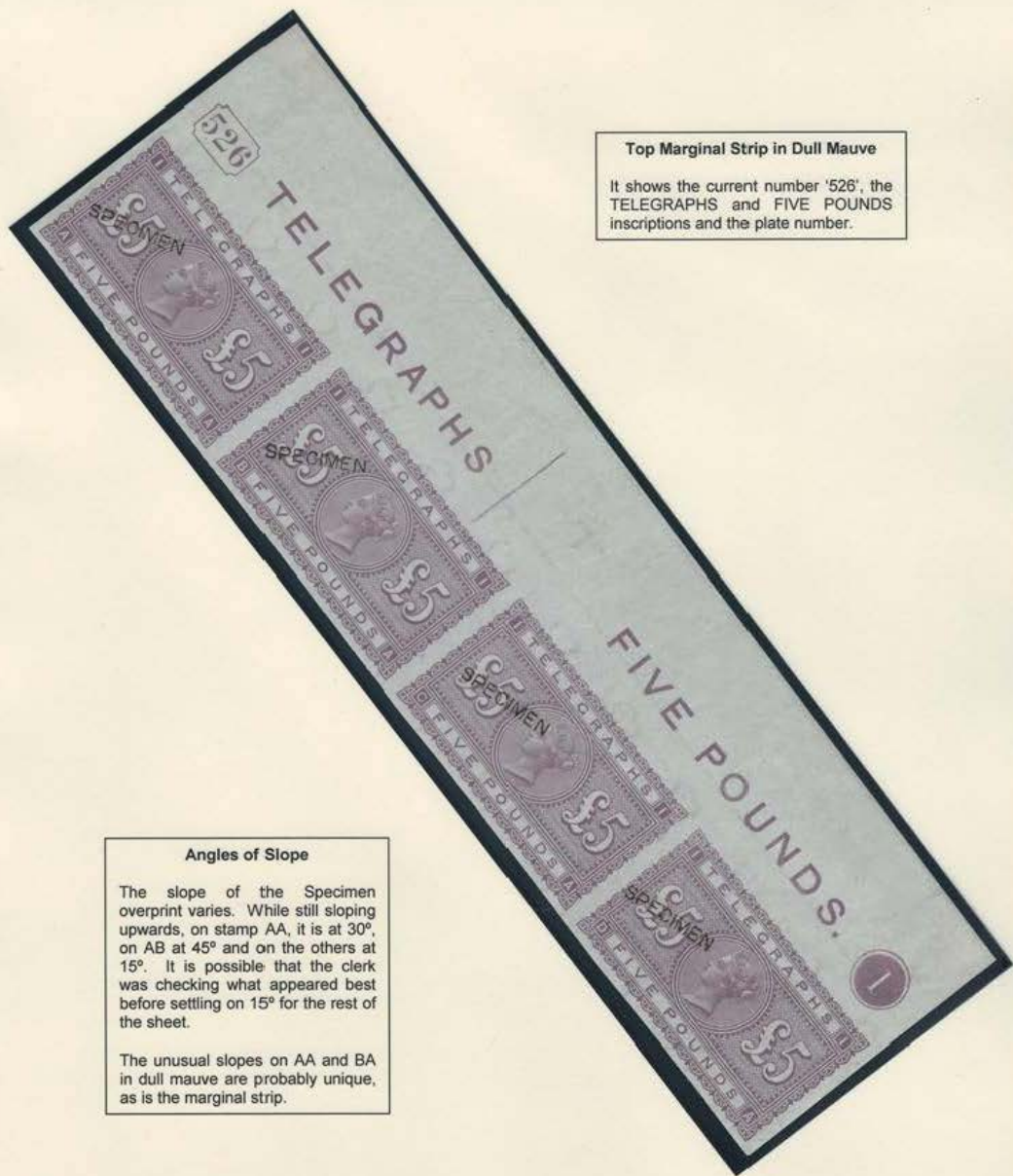
From several examples seen, the lower four rows of the sheet are markedly paler – a result of exposure to light.



Grey-green DL Specimen sloping down

From the lower four rows.

The Telegraphs Colour Trials



Top Marginal Strip in Dull Mauve

It shows the current number '526', the TELEGRAPHS and FIVE POUNDS inscriptions and the plate number.

Angles of Slope

The slope of the Specimen overprint varies. While still sloping upwards, on stamp AA, it is at 30°, on AB at 45° and on the others at 15°. It is possible that the clerk was checking what appeared best before settling on 15° for the rest of the sheet.

The unusual slopes on AA and BA in dull mauve are probably unique, as is the marginal strip.

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Shade Variations in Dull Mauve

Although all from the same sheet, the colours are no longer consistent. The lower rows were probably left in sunlight in 1876 and are now a pale dull purple.



DH
Dull mauve



CG
Paler shade



BJ
Pale dull purple

These wide variations in shade account for the difficulties in assigning the colours correctly. They are frequently incorrectly described in dealers' lists and auction catalogues.

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

The Weak Area Curiosities



Grey-green DG
A weak area of print
under the top right
corner square.



Brown-lilac DF
A similar weak area, but
less pronounced.



Slate-blue DJ
A hint of weak area.



Brown-lilac DM
A hint of weak area.

In isolation, the weak area might simply be assumed to be a 'rub'. However, its existence in that same place on at least ten trials, all from the right side of the sheet, suggests that De La Rue did not apply their usual precision in printing the trials. This may have been due to the urgency surrounding them. These faults are not evident in the issued stamps.



Pale Ultramarine DJ
The entire right side is weakly printed. This
stamp is part of the reconstruction on page 24.

The Telegraphs Colour Trials

Pale Ultramarine



AC-BD

Pale ultramarine in a bright shade,
Specimen type 8 applied diagonally.



AH

In a dull shade, Specimen
type 8 applied diagonally.
19½ × 2½mm



CM

In a dull shade, Specimen
Type 11 horizontally.
20¼ × 3mm

The dull shade of AH, along with other examples seen, indicates that the lower half of the sheet was dull and not just the lower four rows with horizontal overprint as had previously been thought.

The Pale Ultramarine Colour Trials

The shade difference and that the lower four rows have horizontal overprints, had led to the assumption that there were two sheets. This is not the case, as proven below. While the lower three rows have Specimen type 11 horizontally. Stamp DK, although horizontal, is type 8. DL above it is also type 8 but struck diagonally in the same manner as the majority of the sheet.

That there was only one sheet was proven using images of blue trials, the sources of which are:

- DJ, CL and CM are present in this display.
- DK is from the Langmead Collection at the British Library.
- CN-DN are from the Royal Philatelic Collection. This pair is reproduced with the gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen to whom copyright belongs.
- DL is from the R.M. Phillips collection (*Warwick & Warwick, 5th April 2006*). The image was only available in black and white.

The important observation is the way the images knit together. The edges between CN and CM match exactly and clearly were once joined. Similarly, CM was once joined to CL, CL to DL, DL to DK and DK to DJ. Significantly, there are no examples of overlapping edges between adjacent stamps. This confirms that all examples are from just one sheet.

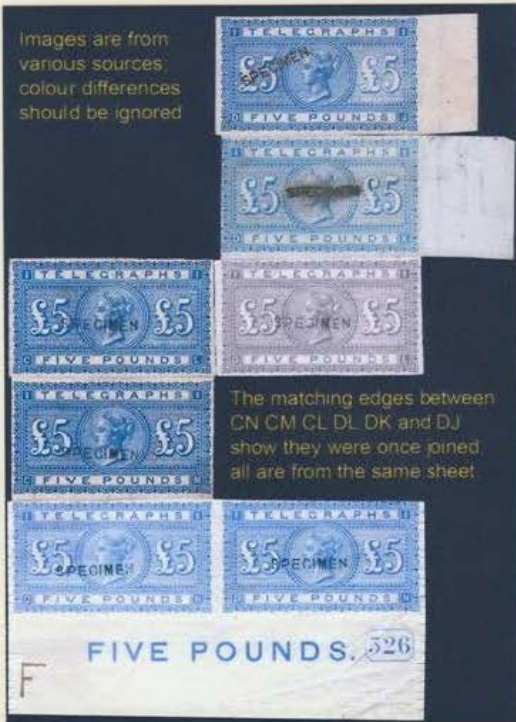


CL
Type 11 horizontally
Dull shade

While CN-DN appear relatively bright, that is due to the scanner available. The actual stamps are similar to CL and CM.

It can be seen that CL, CM and DJ, which were from the same scanner, are identical in shade.

Images are from various sources; colour differences should be ignored



The matching edges between CN CM CL DL DK and DJ show they were once joined, all are from the same sheet.

Confusion with the £5 Probate Court Stamp

The pale ultramarine was attractive and not used for any other Postage or Telegraphs stamp. It became the colour of choice. It had been decided:
The £5 stamp is to be BLUE.

It was about to be submitted to the Postmaster General when an objection was raised. It was too similar to the £5 Probate Court stamp.



It was the same size, would have the same perforations and had the Queen in a circle flanked by £5 symbols. While the difference is obvious here, the same would not be true in the dim yellow gaslight of an 1870s post office. Whiter gaslight, using a mantle, was not available until the 1880s.

To avoid confusion with the Probate Court stamp, the decision was taken to print the £5 in orange (referred to as vermilion). There were no trials in orange.

The Telegraphs Imprimatur and Issued Stamp

The plate was registered on 17th January 1877
and the stamp was issued on 1st March.



Imprimatur

Imperf, Shamrocks watermark sideways inverted. One of only 8 recorded in private hands.



Mint

Shamrocks watermark sideways inverted, perf 15½x15. One of only 8 recorded in private hands.

Sheets were of 56; 14 rows of 4 stamps. They were lettered AA-DN using the sequence of other Telegraphs stamps where the first letter is the *column* rather than the *row*. The top row is lettered AA, BA, CA, DA whereas for all postage stamps at the time, the top row was lettered AA, AB, AC, AD...

It was thought that the landscape format of the Telegraphs stamps was the justification for the different sequence. That is not sound logic. If the sheet is turned so that the stamps are upright, the top row can still be AA, AB... as shown by the block of 2½d from the Lilac and Green series.

Sheet layout

AA	BA	CA	DA
AB	BB	CB	DB
AC	BC	CC	DC
AD	BD	CD	DD
AE	BE	CE	DE
AF	BF	CF	DF
AG	BG	CG	DG
AH	BH	CH	DH
AI	BI	CI	DI
AJ	BJ	CJ	DJ
AK	BK	CK	DK
AL	BL	CL	DL
AM	BM	CM	DM
AN	BN	CN	DN



Landscape format postage stamps with normal sequence AF-AG/BF-BG.

Although some 84,000 stamps were printed, usage was low. In the year to March 1881, it was a mere 1,331 stamps. If usage was uniform throughout its 4½ year life then little more than 6,000 were used. There is no record of the number destroyed once discontinued on 31st October 1881. It was probably in excess of 75,000.

The Telegraphs Specimens

Specimen Type 9 – a Watermark Surprise

This block and single are watermark *sideways* and not the *sideways inverted* of the issued stamps. This newly discovered variety is now listed in the Stanley Gibbons Queen Victoria Specialised Catalogue.

Stamps were overprinted Specimen to invalidate them. They could then be used as samples without the need to account for them fiscally.



Double perfs

A marginal block of four with lower two perfs doubled as shown in the enlargement. This block is linked to the unusually tall stamps below.



The Abnormally Tall Stamps – AM and BM

The first strike of the perforator in row N was normal, as was row M. The next strike for row L was 2-3mm too high; resulting in a row of tall stamps of which AM and BM are examples.

The perforator was re-synchronised and row K was normal – except for doubling of the lower perf holes caused by the high strike of row L, as seen on the lower rows of the block AJ-BK.

The Telegraphs Specimens

Unusual Variant of Specimen Type 9

Dot between the C and I of Specimen plus deformed first E.



This stamp has a 1986 RPSL certificate stating that it is a forgery. While the stamp is genuine, the specimen overprint was believed forged. Although different to the type 9 in the preceding block, it is actually genuine, but of an uncommon type.

For it to be a forgery defies logic. It would imply that someone took a mint £5 Telegraphs, which is *almost impossible to acquire*, and devastated its value by applying a forged overprint with an obviously defective letter E. Two further examples are shown, with varying distortions to the E. With the same specimen type on the 5s value as well, there can be no doubt that it is genuine.



Dot between C and I,
E less filled



Dot between C and I,
E medium filled



The same specimen
with dot on the 5s value

The Telegraphs Specimens

Specimen Types 8 and 11



BC
Specimen type 8
19½ × 2½mm
Unusually crisp strike



BF
Specimen type 8
19½ × 2½mm
Typical heavy 'N'
(Reperforated at left)



AB
Specimen type 11
20¼ × 3mm
Crisp strike



BF
Specimen type 11
20¼ × 3mm
Weak strike at left



BF
Specimen type 11
20¼ × 3mm
Deeper shade

Specimen type 11 is always centred far to the northwest. About 10 copies are known – they had been thought to be all from the same block. The two examples of BF show this is not the case.

Used £5 Telegraphs

The source of all used £5 Telegraphs stamps is dubious. There was no legitimate means by which used copies could reach the public. The only cancelled Telegraphs stamps passed to the public were as pairs of 1d stamps on receipts for sending telegrams. A few low values may have been used in lieu of postage stamps after withdrawal of the Telegraphs but no high values would have been used that way. All are the result of 'liberations'.



Used in Greenock



Two 1d Telegraph stamps used on a receipt.

It is a commonly held belief that the used £5 values came from the same source as the Stock Exchange forgeries. This is not the case. The Stock Exchange forgeries came from Hamper Mill near Watford and all date to around 1872. The £5 does not. The mill ceased trading and sacks of telegram forms, sent for pulping, remained unprocessed. They were discovered some 26 years later.

There are many examples of the 3d plate 8, 6d plate 11, 1s plates 5 & 6 with crisp cds cancels – these also date to 1872. However, later stamps, like the 1873 1s green, are very rare with cds cancels and are generally postally used and not from telegram forms. For any £5 stamps to have gone to Watford, would imply that the Post Office continued sending sacks of waste to a company that had ceased trading.

While many £5 stamps are undoubtedly from security waste, none can have originated from the Watford paper mill.

Used £5 Telegraphs

Cancellations

Used telegraphs stamps have a cds cancel of the dispatching office and can occur with or without a box cancel. Box cancels were limited to a few accounts offices, for example, the CHB (Clearing House Branch) which was at Somerset House. The CHB box cancel was applied long after the telegram had been sent. It is believed to have confirmed entry into a ledger at the CHB. This auditing enabled the Post Office to determine the revenue from Telegraphs.



A bright shade

Parliament St cds and a light CHB box cancel.



St Andrews cds without a box

A telegram sending Golf scores abroad would have been expensive, as each numeric was counted as a word. Rates varied with destination from a few shillings to over £1 per word.



Threadneedle St cds in violet.

Coloured cancels are rare. The TMB/GPO box cancel is the Telegraphs Message Branch which was another section located within Threadneedle St Post Office.



Used at West Strand

One of the offices open 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The cds and TMB/GPO box cancel are both in black.

Used £5 Telegraphs

Late Usage

All Telegraphs stamps were withdrawn on 31st October 1881. After that date, Postage stamps were used for telegrams.



Used at Colchester five months after all telegraphs stamps were withdrawn.



Used almost a year after withdrawal. It has an inverted London code CC squared circle dated 9th October 1882 – a TAB/GPO (Telegraphs Account Branch) box cancel and, strangely on top, a London Western Office cds for 13th October 1882. Use of the TAB/GPO cancel is rare on £5 Telegraphs – one of only two recorded.

The £5 Postage Stamp

The Modified Telegraphs Plate

In 1882, the Telegraphs plate was modified by removing the word TELEGRAPHS in each stamp. The plate was split into two panes of 28 with a stamp-size gutter between them. Sheets were printed in double panes. They were then perforated and separated into panes of 28. A separate 28-set plate bearing POSTAGE, flanked by ornaments, filled the blank spaces where TELEGRAPHS had been. As a two stage printing, POSTAGE can often be out of alignment and in a different shade of orange.

The primary plate comprised 56 images lettered AA-DN and, being derived from the Telegraphs plate, the letters were in the Telegraphs sequence. Unlike other postage values, the first letter indicates the *column* rather than the *row*. The corner letter arrangement is shown below. This is as the £5 Telegraphs but with a central gutter and without major marginal markings.

All are watermark Anchor (twice) and the issued stamps are perf 14.



Imprimatur lettered 'BD'
1 of 22 in private hands

Sheet layout

AA	BA	CA	DA
AB	BB	CB	DB
AC	BC	CC	DC
AD	BD	CD	DD
AE	BE	CE	DE
AF	BF	CF	DF
AG	BG	CG	DG

AH	BH	CH	DH
AI	BI	CI	DI
AJ	BJ	CJ	DJ
AK	BK	CK	DK
AL	BL	CL	DL
AM	BM	CM	DM
AN	BN	CN	DN

The £5 Postage Stamp

Printing Considerations



The illustration above explains how a stamp from the modified Telegraphs plate would appear. It has a gap where the word TELEGRAPHS had been. A second and much simpler plate, bearing just the word POSTAGE flanked by key patterns, was used to complete the blank spaces. Naturally, it was important that the partly finished sheet be correctly positioned to receive the POSTAGE overprint. This was achieved with pinning dots, printed in the side margins at the vertical centre of each pane.



The pinning dot by stamp AD

The enlargement shows a flap of displaced paper where the sheet was impaled onto the pin.

The Printings

There were seven printings as shown below. The first two were on blued paper; the others on white.

Year	Date	Sheets	Stamps	Paper	Colour standards
1882	March	482	26,992	blued	Specimen type 9
1884	November	975	54,600	blued	Triple Specimen type 9
1889	March	975	54,600	white	Cancelled type 14
1892	January	951	53,256	white	
1895	September	488	27,328	white	
1896	November	468	26,208	white	
1900	February	98	5,488	white	Cancelled type 18
Total		4,437	248,472		

The £5 Postage Stamp

Blued and White Papers

Initial printings were on blued or *Revenue* paper. The degree of bluing varied from sheet to sheet and within a sheet. It is often slight. Blued paper printings are normally in a dull buff-orange. White paper was used from 1889 and tends to be in brighter shades of orange or reddish-orange. Allowing for Specimens, 246,759 stamps were issued.



Mint on Blued Paper



Mint on White Paper

The perforations extend through the margin – the De La Rue perforator. Some Specimen type 9 examples have an imperf top margin and the left margin perforated through as shown on the next page.



A sample of the blued Anchor watermark paper used for the 1883 2s.6d, 5s, 10s and 1882 £5.

Inland Revenue in script lettering corresponds to the sheet margin.

The Specimens on Blued Paper

The Somerset House Perforator



Printed by De La Rue but Perforated by Somerset House
The largest known multiple of Specimen type 9

The block of nine overprinted specimen type 9 is perforated through the left margin and the top margin is imperf. This sheet was top-fed and unlike the issued sheets which have one extension hole at each side, the bottom margin imperf through. Just four other examples are recorded that are top fed, all with specimen type 9 overprints. One of these sheets was so badly perforated it would have been scrapped had De La Rue perforated it. This leads to the conclusion that the five imperf sheets, that normally accompanied the registration sheet, were perforated at Somerset House. In a small way, these are abnormalities.



Sloping Perfs

Perforations through the left margin and sloping relative to the design. The perfs would run well into the design at the right-hand side of the sheet. De La Rue would have treated it as waste. Although quality mattered less for Specimens, part of the sheet was probably discarded.

The Specimens on Blued Paper

Specimen type 9 on blued paper is relatively common. It was used in large numbers for the UPU distributions. The three examples below in the brighter orange shade would often be assumed to be white paper. They are, however blued paper, one markedly so. These bright shades are often regummed having come from overseas administration archives. Specimen type 9 in this bright shade on blued paper is scarce. Type 9 on true white paper is exceedingly rare.



Specimen Type 9

The commonly found blued paper shade.



Specimen Type 9

A brighter 'white paper' shade but on blued.



Specimen Type 9

A lighter version of the brighter shade on blued (without gum).



Specimen Type 9

A further example of the brighter shade shown face down to illustrate its genty blued paper.

The Specimens on Blued Paper

Another Specimen type 9 on blued paper is shown below. Like the block of nine shown earlier, this is the top-fed Somerset House perforator with an imperf top margin (re-joined). This also has an interesting 'test strike' of the Specimen overprint. The clerk was presumably trying out the handstamp before tackling the sheet.



Specimen Type 9

Top-fed perforator with additional specimen strike in the margin.



Specimen Type 11 on Blued

This is scarce: type 11 is more often seen on white paper.

The Specimens on Blued Paper

The triple Specimens are in two forms: triple type 9 and type 11 with two type 9 overprints. Both are scarce. The triple type 9 was the colour standard for the second printing (still on blued paper) in November 1884. Only 24 were produced. For years, these have been incorrectly classified as white paper – a stamp that does not exist. The bluing varies, but all are from the same block and, if one is blued, then they all are.



BM
Triple type 9



DL Triple
Wide blue vertical streaking



BK
Paler shade (light exposure)

Type 11 and two Type 9 Specimens

These are scarcer than the triple type 9 and are also on blued paper but even less blued. Just seven examples have been recorded – none in the main institution collections.

No formal purpose has been identified for these, but they may be a trial for the change to the brighter ink in 1889. Possibly, a sheet of weakly blued paper may have been used to gauge the effect of the brighter ink in advance of true white paper being available.



CI
Triple type 11 + 2x type 9



AI
Very faint broad blued streaks
each side of the left anchor.

The type 9 handstamp in these combined triples is not the same as the device employed for the single or triple type 9 examples. The 'I' and 'M' are set closer.

The Specimens on White Paper

Most specimens are on blued paper. White paper examples are generally scarcer.



Type 11 on White Paper



Cancelled Type 14 - White Paper

The 1889 colour standards for the third printing – the first on white paper. No more than 12 exist in private hands.



Type 16 on White Paper

The red-orange 1900 printing. Only seven copies recorded.



Type 9 on white paper

A creamy paper lettered CA. An exceptional rarity



Type 9 on blued paper

The brighter 'white paper' orange shade - lettered CC

Unlisted Specimens

The Double Specimen Type 9

Examples with single and triple type 9 specimen overprints are well known. The double type 9 specimen has not previously been recorded.

It is on blued paper and without gum. There have been attempts to erase the specimen overprints causing damage, particularly to the 'S' of the left Specimen. The stamp has also been bleached and this has taken red out of its colour. Originally, it was thought it might be unique, so its less than ideal condition is tragic but not important.



Double Specimen Type 9

Lettered CH
One of three known

Strangely, the two overprints do not match: they are from different handstamps. This is readily explained. A clerk, assigned to add the specimen, places it to one side so that he does not deface the glorious Queen. His supervisor disapproves of the large area of uncancelled stamp and adds his own and seldom used handstamp.

That might appear speculative, but images of two more double specimens were located, CI and DI – adjacent to CH above. There had probably been a block CH-DI. Curiously, on DI the two different handstamps are reversed. Without application of the second specimen, CH and DI could have led to a fraud by using their uncancelled halves to make a complete stamp.

While one Expert Committee has claimed that the overprints are forged, that is illogical. It would imply that someone took a mint block of four £5 on blued paper (no such blocks have been recorded) and decided to devastate its value by adding two *different* fake specimen overprints. Furthermore, the right-hand Specimen of CH is a close match to the type 9 used for the combined types 9 and 11 triples. The item must be genuine, albeit mistreated by person or persons unknown.

Shades

Pages 42-43 illustrate some of the shades.



Dull Buff-orange on Blue Paper

POSTAGE is in a deeper shade – a good sign of blue paper.



A Typical Orange on White Paper

Example dated 1893



Deep Dull Vermilion on Greyish Paper

No other examples have been seen in this unusual shade and on greyish paper, yet it can only be from the 1889 or 1892 printings. From many other early white paper examples examined, it has to be concluded that this shade and paper was limited to just part of the printing.

Shades

Shades may have been affected by treatment over the years. Examples that may once have been the same shade now appear different.



Bright Orange
Glasgow 1894



Yellow-orange
Threadneedle St 1899



Reddish-orange
Threadneedle St 1899



Distinctive Red-orange
The 1900 printing
Specimen type 16
One of seven known



Distinctive Red-orange
The 1900 printing
Southampton 1901

There are more shades than there are printings and, with a few exceptions, it is not possible to determine the printing from the shade.

Cancellations

Cancellations are known from over 180 different offices. However, the style of cancel falls into a few general categories. The most common is the cds (*circular or counter date stamp*). Within this category some offices are common; others rare. The Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast examples are thought to be concerned with tobacco tax or excise duty on whisky, although there is no clear evidence to support this. Most other cds cancels are likely to be accounting for bulk mail or from telegram forms.



Glasgow cds

The most common cancel, mostly 1894-96, but found from 1882.



Edinburgh cds

Recorded from 1882-96. Most examples seen are 1896.



Belfast cds

Mostly seen 1885-99. May be found with a secondary 'bars' or crayon cancel.



Squared Circles

These are not common. Example used in Mark Lane.



Small Timed cds

Seen from 1898 onwards. Kings Lynn example.



Large Timed cds

All Belfast examples recorded are 5.30am. It is possible that the time was never changed.

Cancellations

Accountancy Cancels and Registered Ovals



Manchester Accounts

Double ring cds – common,
mostly seen from 1892-97.



Accountant's Office cds

Not common



Account Branch PO Glasgow

This is normally a single strike.
The scarcer double strike is shown.



Account Branch PO Glasgow

This same cancel is the most
common on the £1 green IR Officials.
It suggests use in reconciling
payments to the Inland Revenue.
Had there been £5 IR Officials, many
would probably have had this same
cancel.



Registered ovals

WDO (Western District Office) is
seldom seen. Threadneedle St is
common, but not postal use.



Timed registered ovals

Mainly from a few London
Offices. They are uncommon.

Cancellations

Telegraphs Box Cancels

The cds is that of the dispatching office. The box cancel was applied later at one of a few accounting offices, where the revenue from the telegrams was recorded, such as the Clearing House Branch (CHB). These same cancels were used in the Telegraphs era.



CHB box cancel

Southampton Telegraph Office 1884 blued paper.



CHB box cancel

Thrapston 1891 (the only example recorded).



CHB box cancel

Shepton Mallet (the only example recorded) and with a violet box. Coloured cancels are rare.



CHB box cancel

Park St showing late use in 1896 – a few months before use of the box cancels ceased.



PAB/R&AGO box cancel

London South Western Office cds and the scarce Payments Accounts Branch / Receiver & Accountant General's Office box. These are usually indistinct.



TAB/EDINR box cancel

Montrose 1888 Money Order Office cds with an Edinburgh Telegraphs Accounts Branch box. Blued paper. *Edinburgh audited the offices in Scotland.*

Cancellations

Scarcer Cancellation Types



Barred Numerals

These are not common and about half of those seen are covering an erased Specimen. This LS/8 example is genuine usage and unusually clear.



Oval TAB/GPO

Telegraphs Accounts Branch is scarce. The Red Lion St cds is rare. The straight lines seen at the sides are parts of normal box cancels.



Registered large 'R'

The only example recorded.



Cannon St Station Telegraphs Office

'270' in circle with box cancel
The only example recorded.



Money Order Office

Rarity: about 1 in 200.
MOO cds from York



Money Order & Savings Bank

Rarity: about 1 in 80.
MO&SB cds from Crewe

Using a £5 Orange – Fraudulent Re-use

In Victorian times, £5 was a large sum, the equivalent of £500-£1000 today depending on which measure of inflation is used. Those who handled £5 Oranges sometimes succumbed to temptation.



Oval Exchequer Edinburgh in Violet

This example is normal use, although a rare cancel to survive. Below it is another example but fraudulently re-used.



Digitally enhanced image shown at full size to enable direct comparison with the trace of the oval Exchequer cancel in the real stamp.

How the fraud probably worked

The stamp has normal Accountant's Office cancels for 15th January 1892, but at its centre is a faint oval Exchequer Edinburgh cancel. At first, it might appear that the cds cancels were simply to supplement the faint oval to ensure the stamp was properly cancelled. However, the forensic image above shows that the oval is dated 21st November 1891. The disparate dates, by 8 weeks, prove fraudulent use. It is probable that a clerk in the Accountant's Office had acquired an oval Exchequer £5 from security waste, bleached the violet cancel and then used the stamp again as part of his normal job. He could then take a mint £5 stamp from his stock to balance his till. Based on three known used on 24th November 1891, actual usage was significant and, with a ready availability of Exchequer cancels, the sums involved in this fraud may have eclipsed the Stock Exchange forgery.

The example below, on blued paper, has an erased inverted violet TMB box cancel. This may have also been fraudulent re-use, but is probably a more recent attempt to improve the stamp's appearance by reducing the box cancel. Its certificate confirms blued paper, but fails to mention the erased box. The forensic image shown at real size highlights the erased box cancel.



Digitally enhanced image shown at full size to enable direct comparison.

Not Using a £5 Orange



The largest known used £1 piece that is contemporary with the £5 Orange.

The Rejoined Row of Ten

The 1891 £1 used on 14th July 1893 illustrates the need for the £5 value. It is larger than a telegram form. Two £5 values could (or should) have been used and taken far less space.

Stephens Green Shelbourne was a small telegraphs office in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. It is possible that they did not stock £5 values or had simply exhausted their supply.

Using a £5 Orange

The £24.10s.0d Piece

THE most important used £5 item known



Four each of the £5 and £1 watermark anchor plus 10s all on blued paper tied to a Post Office bulk mail docket. The piece confirms the purpose for which a significant number of £5 Oranges were used. The reverse of the docket explains...

Using a £5 Orange

The reverse of the £24.10.0d piece reveals it is a docket accounting for monies paid for bulk mail. It is dated 18th June 1883 by a High Holborn WC cds and is a statement of the monies received for pre-payment of postage on inland letters, books or samples received at a specific PO counter. That day, the clerk handled bulk mail from four businesses: Worlds Dispensary, Royal Standard, incorporated Law Society and Hearts of Oak. The docket shows the number of items each sent, their unit cost and the total value. Each entry is initialised by an inspector who would have verified the count and arranged for a 'paid' marking to be applied to each item.

Met. Dis.—No. 122.

Met. Stamp

STATEMENT of Monies for Pre-paid Postage on the undermentioned Inland Letters, Books, or Samples received at the Counter this day.

Number of Letters, Packets, &c.	Rate each	Name of Person or Firm by whom sent	Pre-paid Postage		Certificate of Inspector as regards amount paid
			s.	d.	
400	1/2	Worlds Dispensary	5	0	1/2
780	1	Royal Standard	3	5	1/2
1520	1/2	Law Society	3	10	1/2
1620	12	Hearts of Oak	6	15	1/2
Total			24	10	

Window Account for this date debited with the above amount.

J. B. [Signature]
Counter Clerk

25th June 1883

The reverse of the £24.10s.0d piece on the previous page (reduced).

The total received by the clerk was £24.10s.0d. Stamps to that value were affixed to the form, thereby keeping the total of cash and mint stamps for his till balanced. The clerk ran a crayon line through the stamps (*it is under the cds cancels*) tying them to the piece to ensure the stamps could not be removed undetected in transit to an accounts section where the stamps were cancelled by the more generic London WC cds the same day.

This is the most important £5 Orange piece known as it explains precisely how large quantities were used. This is not postal use, but end-of-day internal accounting. The creases are probably from folding to smuggle it out of the post office.

Using a £5 Orange

Postal Use

Genuine postal use is scarce. Provably postal use examples are very rare. Their numbers are measured in single digits. One such example shows a £5 Orange used with an 1891 £1 green. It was used on a registered package at Gresham House EC Post Office. The paper is a strong Manila type consistent with a sturdy envelope, in contrast to a flimsy docket. A package weighing $3\frac{3}{4}$ lbs to a non-UPU country could have warranted the £6 charge.



The Gresham House Piece



Penny Post Jubilee South Kensington

Three copies are known. Possibly used postally, but probably cancelled by favour at the exhibition on 2nd July 1890.

Postally used stamps would end up in the hands of the public and should have two or more cancels. This was to prevent re-use by piecing together the uncanceled parts of two or more stamps. Those used on docketts, in principle, did not reach the public and a single cancel was deemed sufficient. Two or more cancels on a £5 stamp are potentially postally used, but not provably so, unless on a piece consistent with a postal package.



Possible Postal Use

Vere St with multiple 1896 registered cds cancels.



Possible Postal Use

The red-orange shade from Lombard St with multiple 1901 registered ovals.

The Plate Varieties

The well-known TA and JC frame breaks of the £1 value have been listed by Stanley Gibbons for years. Similar, and often better, plate varieties on the £5 have not received any attention, apart from two items included in the 2008 edition of their Queen Victoria Specialised Catalogue. The following pages show these and examples of other constant varieties found from personal research.



'JC' Frame Break
1884 £1 brown (crowns)



'TA' Frame Break
1891 £1 green



'BN' Variety

The outstanding frame breaks on the £5 lettered BN. There are major defects by the B-square and left 1-square. In addition, the left and top frames show considerable wear. Further states are shown on the next page...



All plate varieties shown in pages 53-62 have been verified as constant using two or more examples. Usually only one example is included.

The Plate Varieties

'BN' Variety

This exists in a number of states and it underwent various repairs. Below are four examples in states different to the Plymouth example on the previous page.



An example used in 1894. There is some distortion of the frame left of the B-square and small breaks over the left 1-square.



By 1899, the frame left of the B-square has almost gone, more so than in the Plymouth example on the previous page. The damage around the 1-square is now severe and the frame-line over POSTAGE is almost missing.

By 1899, the frame left of the B-square has almost gone, more so than in the Plymouth example on the previous page. The damage around the 1-square is now severe and the frame-line over POSTAGE is almost missing.



A mint example in the 1900 red-orange shade has part of the B-square frame repaired. While the 1-square is similar to before, the top frame-line is nearer to normal. Although creased, this may well be the only mint example of this state of the BN variety.



A red-orange example used in Burnley in 1902 is similar to the mint example, but the breaks are less apparent over POSTAGE.

With fewer than 98 sheets issued in the red-orange shade and a survival rate of around 2½%, there are unlikely to be more than 2-3 examples in this state.

The Plate Varieties



'CN' Variety

Major frame breaks in the top right corner ornaments. The used examples span six years and show progressive deterioration. By 1900, another break developed 4mm lower. There is also considerable distortion and thinning of the same frame line.



An example overprinted Specimen type 11 without the frame break. It does show a slight thinning where the breaks developed.

The Plate Varieties



'BH' Variety

The Stanley Gibbons catalogue illustration of the frame break is taken from this stamp. However, the break is less significant than the extensive distortion of the inner frame and by the 'H' square at the right.



'DN' Variety

Double frame break by the E of POSTAGE and further breaks by the right hand corner '1' square. The two examples show that the varieties are constant.

The Plate Varieties



'CM' Variety

Breaks appear in the thin frame line around POSTAGE, particularly in the top left corner and over the 'A'. The second example used three years later shows the same breaks. Strangely, in the later example, the left corner appears less damaged but this may be due to its heavier impression.



'A1' Variety

A break by the top right corner square on an example used in Bradford in 1900.

'CG' Variety

A break by the top right corner square and ornament on an example used in Darlington. Also distortion of the middle side frame-line. Although used in 1903, this is not the red-orange shade – old stock was being used.

The Plate Varieties



'BL' Variety

In the pair below, dated 1900, there are clear distortions and breaks in the outer left frame line. The 1899 example above has only a mere hint of these faults.



'BM' Variety

By 1900, 'BM' had developed breaks over the top right corner square. These same breaks are more pronounced on 'BM' in the pair above.

The Plate Varieties

The 'AD' Variety

The diamond border ornament by the loop of the left £ sign has broken away from the frame. Various states exist. It is one of the few varieties that existed on the Telegraphs £5. Strangely, AD is normal in the colour trials (see AD in the blue trial block on page 24), dated 15th December 1876, but is present on the black proof sheet held at the British Library, dated 17th January 1877.



On blued paper used in Kington in 1888. A clear break between the diamond and the frame.
Kington – rare cancel



Used in Birmingham in 1895. The diamond has been rejoined to the frame.



Used in Edinburgh in 1896. The diamond is just starting to break away and the arcs in the border are weaker.



Used at Throgmorton Avenue in 1897. The diamond is rejoined to the frame but thin at its base. The arcs have been repaired.



Used at Gracechurch St in 1902. The diamond has broken away again and the arcs are showing breaks.

The Plate Varieties



'DM' Varieties

Breaks over both upper corner squares in 1899 Threadneedle St example, become more prominent in the 1902 Loughborough example.



'AH' Variety

Clear frame break under the A-square.



'CJ' Variety

Frame distortion over the ornament left of POSTAGE.



'AE' Variety

Blued paper used in Ventnor in 1883. The lower left corner of the left key pattern is sliced. This is the only significant variety on the overprint plate. It also occurs on stamp AL. It was corrected by 1896.

The Plate Varieties



'CA' Variety

Red-orange shade used in Kings Lynn in 1903. A clear frame break by the left 1-square and the main frame under POSTAGE.



'CE' Variety

Red-orange shade used in Middlesbrough, 1902. Major distortion to much of the left frame line.



'DK' Variety

Considerable distortion of the left frame and weak thin frame under OUNDS.



'AM' Variety

Weak thin frame under DS and breaks under the M-square. There are similar breaks by the right 1-square.

The Plate Varieties



'CF' Variety

Break in thin frame over F and weak frame left of the C-square. Used in Walsall in 1902, but not the red-orange shade.



'D' Variety

Break over right 1-square. Used in Threadneedle St in 1899.



'D' Variety

Break over right 1-square. Red-orange shade used in Kings Lynn in 1902. The plate has deteriorated since 1899.

Error in Use



Missing Year Slug

Other examples with the same basic Darlington timed cds from January are dated 1902. It is probable that the omitted year slug was '02'.

The £5 Inland Revenue Officials

The £5 IR Official Essay

The Inland Revenue started to use stamps overprinted 'I.R. Official' in 1882. These were on the current ½d green, 1d lilac and 6d grey.

In 1884, a need (*almost certainly not postal*) was seen for Inland Revenue specific high values. To that end, essays were produced in 1884. These have a large 32x15mm IR Official (with serifs) overprint on Specimen type 9 stamps of the current 5s, 10s, £1 and £5 values.



Only four copies are believed to exist.

This one, lettered 'BA', with RPSL certificate, is illustrated in 'Samuel & Huggins - *Specimen Stamps and Stationery of Great Britain*'.

While this overprint suited the £1 and £5, it was hopelessly oversized for the 5s and 10s values. On these, it extended beyond both sides. A more suitable sans-serif overprint, in the style used for the low values but bolder, was introduced for the 5s, 10s and £1 in 1885.

The £5 IR did not proceed.



Issued 10s IR Official



Issued £1 IR Official

The £5 Inland Revenue Officials

The Small £5 IR Official

A different 'IR' overprint is known on the 1883 2s.6d, 5s, 10s, £1 green and the £5. Unlike the Large IR, this is not an essay but simply a handstamp required for marking stamps in an Inland Revenue collection. There were two different overprints with a 'small IR'. On 14th June 1894, De La Rue supplied the Inland Revenue with a *steel hand-mark* inscribed 'IR/Specimen' and a *type in handle* (handstamp) with 'IR' only. This copy is the 'IR only' handstamp applied to a stamp with an existing Specimen type 11.



Believed the only known
£5 with the small IR overprint



This £1 green also has two small IR handstamps and a certificate (not RPS) claiming it genuine. From comparison with the £5 above, it is clear they are rubber handstamps and not the IR handstamp supplied by De La Rue.

Unification

The Objective of Unification

The aim was to have a single series of stamps that could be used for both postal and revenue purposes. It affected all values from 1/2d - £5. Work started in March 1881 and the first result was the 1d lilac, inscribed *Postage and Inland Revenue*, issued on 12th July 1881. It replaced the 1d Postage stamp and the 1d Inland Revenue stamp. The latter was authorised for postal use from 1st June 1881.



It was intended that all values would be inscribed **POSTAGE & REVENUE**, with or without the ampersand. This intent included the £5 value. Progress was slow, it took three years before the full Lilac and Green series appeared in 1884.

Meanwhile, the urgent need for a £5 value meant it could not wait for full unification. It was issued inscribed just **POSTAGE** in March 1882.

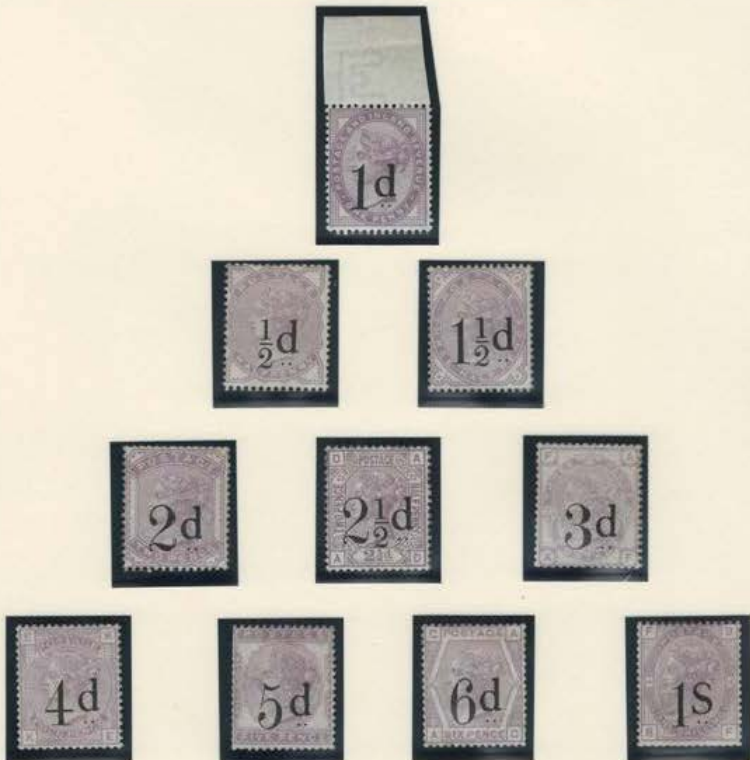
Unification needed to satisfy the divergent requirements of the Inland Revenue, the Post Office and what was actually practical for De La Rue. There was considerable friction:

- The Inland Revenue insisted that any stamps used for revenue purposes be printed in doubly fugitive ink, as was the 1d lilac. This was to ensure that any attempt to remove pen cancellations would damage the stamp sufficiently to prevent its re-use.
- The Post Office wanted a series of stamps on which the face value would be evident in poor light, even when postmarked; they needed strong bright colours.
- De La Rue simply wanted the contract. They were keen to promote their lucrative fugitive inks as only they had them.

Unification

Abolition of the Telegraphs Stamps

After introducing the 1d lilac, the next phase in unification was the abolition of all Telegraphs stamps on 31st October 1881 after which postage stamps were used instead. This meant there was no longer a £5 value – the decision had not been thought through. However, by this time, the 10s and £1 values of 1878 were available to relieve the space issue on telegram forms.



The Temporary Unified Series

It was nearly two years before the second unified stamp, the 2s.6d inscribed *Postage & Revenue* became available in 1883. There was pressure to introduce a unified series quickly and, to that end, De La Rue produced essays from 1/2d to 1s in doubly fugitive lilac. These comprised the current stamps, each overprinted with its face value in large black figures. Only eight sets were made. These were intended as a Temporary Unified series, pending production of the new series.

Objections were raised: the black overprints would be obscured by postmarks and, with such a simple overprint, it would be too easy to forge 1s overprints on 1d stamps.

Unification

The De La Rue Schemes

Over two years, De La Rue developed a series of four schemes of essays for all values from ½d - £5. Just one copy of each of the first three schemes and two of the fourth exist in private hands. The unique third scheme for the £5 value is shown below.



The £5 Value from the Third De La Rue Scheme.

This was based on the issued £5 but with letters in all four corners and the inscription POSTAGE REVENUE rather than POSTAGE. It is from the De La Rue Archives. Due to time pressures, unlike the other schemes, no duplicate was made for the Inland Revenue. The £5 from the Postmasters' Notice, which is based on the fourth De La Rue scheme, is shown below for comparison.



While the Inland Revenue wanted letters in all four corners, De La Rue thought them unnecessary. On 15th February 1884, De La Rue wrote to the Inland Revenue pointing out that it would be impossible to alter the existing plate and that a new plate would be required to accommodate letters in all corners. Anxious to save the £80 cost of a new plate, the Inland Revenue agreed to retain the £5, as already issued, with just two corner letters.

Unification

The eventual result of unification was the Lilac and Green series along with the high values. The 1d to 2s.6d had both POSTAGE and REVENUE in their inscriptions. The other values, inscribed just POSTAGE, were unlikely to be needed for revenue purposes. As shown below, the 2s.6d, 5s, 10s and £5 were initially on blued paper. The 1d, 9d, 2s.6d, 5s, 10s and £5 were already in use; the other values were issued on 1st April 1884.



The Postmasters' Notices

Until 1873, Postmasters had been informed of new stamps with real stamps overprinted Specimen affixed to Circulars. For the Lilac & Green series, De La Rue suggested using an Inleaf – an illustration, with crude lithographed images of the stamps.

A proof of this Inleaf is shown on the next page followed by the issued Inleaf. The proof, dated 17th January 1884, shows all the stamps that would be available on 1st April 1884. The item is unique although 3-4 variations of it exist, mostly in institution collections. Each image is pen cancelled and notably, at this stage the £5 still had letters in all four corners. It was, however, now inscribed POSTAGE rather than POSTAGE REVENUE.

17 JAN 84

SCHEME
SHOWING THE
DESIGNS AND COLOURS OF THE STAMPS
THAT WILL BE IN USE AFTER
APRIL THE 1st, 1884.



Pen "Cancelled"

SCHEME
 SHOWING THE
 DESIGNS AND COLOURS OF THE STAMPS
 THAT WILL BE IN USE AFTER
 APRIL THE 1st, 1884.



*Printed & Coloured by Miss Higgins
 Post-Office of Chester St. Post-Office, S.W.*

Unification

The Postmasters' Notice

The previous page shows an example of the issued Inleaf printed in the issued colours on soft buff card. Very unusually, it is at its full size and fine. De La Rue printed 16,000 of these but most that have survived are in poor condition. Postmasters nailed or glued them to walls and, when removed, often left their corners on the wall or they became torn. Most extant copies have been trimmed closer to the stamp images to remove peripheral defects.

This example bears an endorsement showing it came from Churton St Post Office. This was within walking distance of London Victoria Railway Station. The post office no longer exists.

In the issued Inleaf, the £5 was as the existing stamp with the POSTAGE inscription, letters in the lower corners and the plate numbers at the top.

Interestingly, the 5d value was not as the issued stamp. It has a line under the 'd' of 5d, rather than the dot of the issued stamp. The difference is illustrated below.



Line under 'd'



Dot under 'd'

The only tangible results of the Temporary Unified series were the 3d and 6d with red overprints issued on 1st January 1883. Examples overprinted Specimen type 9 are shown.



3d on 3d



6d on 6d

The whole unification process had taken over three years and the resulting Lilac and Greens were not regarded as satisfactory. They were quickly replaced by the Jubilee series in 1887. It was a sorry story of delays, conflicts of interest, changes of mind and then rushed decisions. At least, the £5 Orange came out of the process unscathed.

Forgeries – Telegraphs



A photographic forgery

In black on thin card. The design is 0.5mm narrower than the issued stamp.

A Spoof Proof

A lithographed creation designed to simulate printer's waste. There are two brownish-gold images, one inverted, lettered AH and a further image in black. This is believed to date to before 1960.



2012 Reproduction in Gold

Perf 11, unwatermarked paper. Many similar items exist. They originate from Latvia.

Forgeries – Postage

Forgeries come in two main types:

- Those where the basic stamp is genuine, but has been treated in some way to 'improve' it with a view to increasing its apparent value.
- Those where the entire stamp is forged. Some of these are well executed and many might assume them to be genuine. Others are more crude. They are less likely to deceive but provide a reasonable 'space-filler' for those unwilling or unable to afford a genuine example.

Erased Specimens

Apart from reperforating, regumming and repairing stamps, a favourite is converting Specimen stamps into used ones. Blued paper Specimens, especially without gum, are much cheaper than their fine used counterparts. There is a strong incentive to convert the one into the other.



An example on blued paper. Threadneedle St registered oval cancel. It has a 1985 RPSL certificate stating: "on blued paper, is genuine."



It actually has an erased SPECIMEN overprint as seen in this glancing angle photograph.



Other examples are more obvious. This time, less effort has been made to erase the Specimen overprint and the Oxford cancel applied does little to cover it. More often, the cancel is positioned so that its lettering masks the Specimen area. Barred numeral cancels are often hiding a Specimen. Some examples may be fraudulent use.

Forgeries – Postage

Forgeries with Invalid Corner Letters



The 'AQ' Paris Forgery

One of the best in terms of quality is the Paris forgery, so-called because it is where Robson Lowe first found it in 1928. It is printed by letterpress. Were it not for the impossible corner letters, it would be taken by many as genuine.



This same forgery is also known in orange on paper with an impressed 'anchors' watermark and fake Stirling cds cancels dated 5th January 1889. It is non-fluorescent paper and perf 14 with rather small perforation holes. The inset shows the incredible accuracy of the detail in the head and background shading lines. The AQ forgery in either form is rare.



The 'DO' forgery

On piece with a fake Lombard St, code A2, registered oval dated 3rd April 1902. It is perf 14 and affixed to brown paper to disguise its lack of watermark. As seen in the inset, the head is quite coarse and the horizontal shading lines around the Queen waver and lack the uniformity of the genuine stamps. There are only ten shading lines over the head instead of twelve.

Forgeries – Postage

Forgeries Lettered AA

The AA forgeries are the most prolific and most originate from the same source. Proofs exist in black on glazed paper. They are believed to date to the 1960s or before. Their quality is excellent, apart from a fundamental error – the plate numbers have serifs.



The serif error was corrected and new proofs produced on rough paper with some loss of definition in the process.

Forgeries – Postage

Proofs of the corrected AA dies were also produced on the glazed paper.



In correcting the serif errors, new faults were introduced causing doubling of the frame line under POSTAGE. There were two different dies. In the four images above, the top left example is different to the other three. These differences are described on the next page using the 'mint' stamps derived from the dies.

Forgeries – Postage

Based on the revised image, high quality 'mint' forgeries were produced. Two types are shown.



A mint forgery lettered AA. Printed by letterpress on non-fluorescent unwatermarked gummed paper, perf 14. The perforation alignment is accurate and appears as good as comb perf.

While the printing detail is excellent, it has errors. A margin at the right is impossible for a stamp lettered AA and it has two extension perf holes at the top and none at the base. Each should be one extension hole. In addition, there is a break in the thin frame left of the key pattern and doubling of the frame in places under POSTAGE. Most AA forgeries are derived from this die.



A mint forgery from the same source but on laid paper. The lines in the laid paper are diagonal but are presumed the result of the impression being diagonal on normal laid paper. This is from a second die without the break left of the key pattern. There is still some doubling of the frame under POSTAGE.

Forgeries – Postage

'Used' AA Forgeries

With the same break and doubling as the first mint example on the previous page.



Lettered AA Used in Malta on Piece.

The A25 duplex cancel is forged, the stamp is forged, but at least the piece it is on is genuine!

Edinburgh AA Forgery

Faked 8th January 1896 cds, perf 14, without watermark.



The Worcester AA Forgery

Faked 12.45pm 8th December 1899 cds. Perf 14 with impressed fake anchor watermarks – backstamped 'forgery'.



The Worcester AA Forgery

Perforations less carefully aligned and not backstamped 'forgery'.

The King Edward VII £5

The accession of King Edward VII meant that new stamps were needed for all values. These initially included the £5 denomination. This would automatically overcome the problems associated with the deterioration of the existing plate and work on a new £5 value started and proceeded as far as the creation of a new die.

Unlike its Victorian counterpart, there were no corner letters. National Archives file IR 28/66 dated 15th May 1901 explains that *"the idea that they served a practical purpose had ceased to be entertained"*.

The two main types of die proof are shown. Six of each are recorded in private hands.



King Edward VII £5 Die Proof

In black on thin card endorsed
'Before Hardening 11 MAR 02'



King Edward VII £5 Die Proof

In black on thin card endorsed
'After Hardening 13 MAR 02'

The King Edward VII £5

A Variant of the 13th March Die Proof

This has the initials GKR in the lower left corner. While the initials resemble GKB, they match the signature of George K. Robertson, accountant at the Stamping Department at Somerset House. Two examples are known.



In black on thin card endorsed
'After Hardening 13 MAR 02'
and with initials.

The Demise of the £5 Orange

Usage had declined, from over 22,000 in 1896 to just 2,785 in 1900. The demand had become insufficient to warrant the cost of a new plate. By 1903, while the main Inland Revenue stock had become depleted, the £5 Orange was still available in some post offices and from at least one London office in the 1920s. Robson Lowe is rumoured to have purchased the last sheet.

The King Edward VII version was abandoned and brought the fascinating Five Pound Orange to a close.

The Post Office then managed without a £5 postage stamp until 1977 when the large Machin head £5 was issued.