

Britain's Largest Stamp

It is often said that Rowland Hill favoured postal stationery rather than stamps for the prepayment of mail and certainly at the beginning of May 1840 there were huge numbers of envelopes and lettersheets available for sale to the public throughout the British Isles, whereas the printing of the Penny Black and Twopence Blue stamps had only just begun, their availability and distribution being very erratic at first.

Mulready's poetic design for the first issue of postal stationery, quickly rejected by the public even before it became valid for postage.

The Uniform Penny Post was brought into being in a great hurry and it was not until late in 1839 that a prominent Irish artist, William Mulready, RA, was asked to design the new stamped stationery. Mulready's design showed Britannia sending winged messengers to all corners of the empire, below which were scenes of the letters they conveyed being eagerly read.

Only minor changes were made to Mulready's design before it was approved early in 1840.

Mulready's final drawing was given to John Thompson to engrave onto a brass plate from which the printing formes would be produced. When this had reached a satisfactory state, the value, other markings and side tablets for the lettersheets were added and the huge printing order was set in motion.

Despite the message that Mulready had tried to convey through his poetic design, it was far too ornate and fussy for the 19th century public. From 2 May 1840, the day after the stationery was first put on sale, the national press ridiculed the design to such an extent that many people refused to use the new envelopes and lettersheets, preferring instead the more simple

1d and 2d stamps with their neat design and clean lines.

The PO considered that the whole of Mulready's design was the stamp and it must rank as one of the world's largest, covering as it did the whole of the envelope front. Even the PO had to issue special instructions to staff indicating where to strike it, favouring that Britannia should receive the cancelling mark. Because of the size of the design the PO was concerned that if the stamp were cancelled in any position other than on Britannia the cancellation could be covered with a label and the item reused.

Many 1d lettersheets were printed on the inside with a variety of advertisements.

THE MILTON PRESS PRINTING ESTABLISHMENTS,

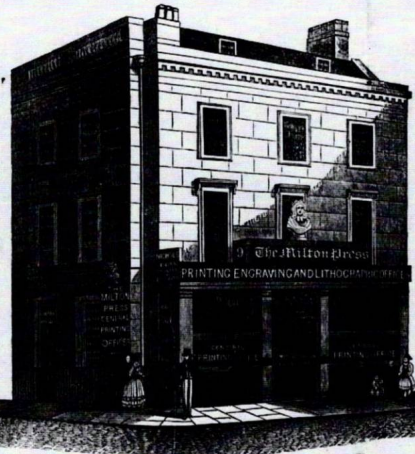
CHANDOS STREET, STRAND, AND SLOANE SQUARE, CHELSEA.

[The Principal would impress upon the Public to notice that he has no connexion, direct or indirect, with any other office.]

8 & 9, CHANDOS STREET, STRAND. AND 35, SLOANE SQUARE, CHELSEA.

He is generally termed a puffler who has no sense, and is contented to bring himself into notice by advertisement. The name is misapplied. The man of business, uniting integrity with all his actions, is justified in the adoption of every means to obtain his end. The same strictly honest man who advertises to deceive, and when you apply for the article sanctioned, trickery and falsehood is resorted to, instead of equitableness. But no understanding such characters abound; it were a folly to question the pretensions of a good sovereign because some base coin is found in the land.

JOHN NICHOLS.



The great evil of society in the present day is, men less of principle, and less up with party. Let us for a moment look at our House of Commons, we shall see three parties, with leaders to each; whatever they say or do, their parties applaud, their minds approve. Until this state of things is altered, England will never be at rest. Let our senators sink their most dissimilar, and unite in one common name for the welfare of our country, and England will soon be a nation. Reader, avoid being of a party spirit, as you would the pollution that walks in darkness.

JOHN NICHOLS.

The above is a view of the Central Office, Chandos Street, Strand.

LETTER-PRESS.

In this department list of prices can be furnished, owing to the orders ever varying. Immense fonts of type enable the Principal to execute all manner of work with that despatch usually required by the Press; while the endless variety of Ornamental Type affords occasion for that elegance to which the art has of late years arrived.

Estimates furnished; and Gentlemen engaged on Committees for charitable purposes will find it much to the interest of their respective societies to permit the Principal of the Milton Press Establishment to send an estimate. The largest Posting Bills West of London.

ENGRAVING.

Banker's Checks, Bills of Fare, Shop and Address Cards, Book and Chamber's Labels, &c. at materially reduced prices.

Arms found and Engraved, without any charge made for searching the Heraldry Books.

Books Engraved in the most splendid style.

Be careful of what capital you possess; by a judicious outlay you may arrive at wealth. The Society of Biography furnishes numerous instances of men who now rank amongst nobility, that were once in the vale of poverty.

COPPER-PLATE.

The following list of prices will at once convince the most sceptical of the important fact, that CHELSEA PRESS with REAGAN are rightly adhered unto at the above Establishment:—

500 Trademark's Shop Cards	7s. 6d. usually charged 15s. 6d.
500 Extra Superior ditto	15s. 0d. "
1,000 Post Rec. Invoices	15s. 0d. "
4. Name Plate elegantly cut	4s. 0d. "
100 Engraved or Coloured Cards	7s. 6d. "
100 Lady's or Gentlemen's Ad.	2s. 0d. "
Arms Cards	2s. 6d.

The Presses used are HERRINGTON'S improved with Steel Rollers; and to avoid the dust arising from charcoal fire, or an open stove, Mr. HERRINGTON'S of Poland Street, has been employed, at an immense expence, in fitting up a Warm Water Apparatus.

Should you employ a Stationer to print for you, you can ensure the same superior work and low charges (for the Stationer's per centage is not infringed upon) by merely asking when you give your order, "Do you employ the MILTON PRESS to print for you?"

LITHOGRAPHY.

This is executed on the Establishment: first-rate Artists being engaged, the Principal is enabled to materially reduce the price of this commercial style of Printing, and at the same time produce work that will vie with the most eminent contemporary; and be it observed that the Milton Press is the only Establishment known in this great metropolis where all the relative branches of Printing are executed on one range of presses. (Others take it in, and put it out, and therefore are necessitated to increase the charge to compensate for time. An elegant assortment of splendid borders for Shop Cards drawn on Stone by eminent Artists; the interior printed in Letter Press. Maps, Plans, Ball-room Lines, Prints (both in chalk and ink), Circulars, &c. &c. The Principal has discovered a process of transferring impressions from Copper Plates to Stone, so as to preserve the beauty of the Engraving; and by multiplying the transfers, an immense saving is realized when the number required is considerable.

1000 Circular Letters, Large Post	£3 usually charged £5 6s.
1000 ditto, Letter size	£2 " " £4 6s

Circulars corrected and written without charge.

Be punctual in all your payments—do not wait till you have all the amount of your bill, take part of it in your creditor, he will then see that you are a person of principle, and credit you accordingly, which may be of great use to you in cases of emergency.

Early rising is good, but if you do not connect the well spending of your money the day you had better have him in bed. It is not enough that you wake early, you must have your mind clear, and your feet warm, and your clothes clean, and your pocket full.

The Printed Advertisements

Despite their lack of popularity, the lettersheets received a new lease of life less than two weeks after they were first released. It is not known who thought of the idea first, but many of the 1d lettersheets and some of the 2d values were printed with advertisements on their reverse sides. These advertisements fall into two groups, those promoting firms such as insurance and manufacturing companies who printed and used the lettersheets themselves and those containing a collection of small adverts, the income from which enabled the publisher to sell the lettersheets at less than face value (often between 8d or 10d a dozen) but still making a profit for himself.

There are over 300 different advertisements and other designs known to have been printed on the reverse of the Mulready stationery, some being fairly common, while only one or two copies of others may exist today. In the majority of cases it was the 1d lettersheets which were used in this way, although some 2d lettersheets and occasionally one or two envelopes were also printed in a similar fashion. All of these additional printings make a fascinating study in their own right and give us a glimpse into the history of that period. However this reprieve and substantial price reduction failed to regain popularity for the Mulready stationery and in the end huge stocks were destroyed, so great was the task that the Post Office had to construct a special machine for the purpose.

Fear of Forgery

The Victorians were extremely concerned that their envelopes and lettersheets would be forged. During the initial design stage early in 1840 it was originally intended that watermarked paper would be used for printing both the envelopes and lettersheets, but when prices were sought from various paper manufacturers in February of that year, the lowest quotation was submitted by John Dickinson, not for paper with a watermark but for one with silk threads laid in the paper itself.

Dickinson had invented the process and owned the patent for making silk thread paper. It was manufactured in a continuous sheet on machines kept secure behind locked doors, guarded night and day and worked by carefully selected and trusted operators. Silk thread paper had proved itself for a number of years previously, having been used for government bonds and legal papers, and with this kind of pedigree it was accepted in lieu of the more

No. 1.—JUNE 17, 1840.

HALLET'S

The plan of this work is to sell the Envelopes at 8d. per dozen to Advertisers, and to the Public at 10d. Every Advertiser shall be at liberty to draw (if he pleases) after the rate of one dozen stamps for every line of his advertisement, by which the circulation will be, in a great measure, in their own hands. Nevertheless, the Proprietors will sell to the public the whole, should the advertiser not require them. It is hardly necessary to say, from the great reduction in price, they are immediately bought up by the public, and the edition being 5000, added to its novelty, offers a medium for publicity hitherto unprecedented; and means will be used for each advertiser to see that that number is really printed.

Ease and Comfort in Shaving.

MESSRS. B. and S. COWAN have now completed their invaluable QUADRILATERAL CHINESE RAZOR SHARPENER, the use of which renders the operation of shaving no longer painful to the most tender skin. By a very simple process the keenest edge may be speedily given to the bluntest razor or penknife. To be had wholesale, of the Proprietors, B. and S. Cowan, No. 164, Fenchurch-street; and retail, of all respectable perfumers, &c., in the United Kingdom, price 5s. 6d., 7s. 6d., and 9s. 6d. Also may be had, Cowan's Canton Razor Strop Paste, at 6d., 1s., and 2s. per pa. ket.

TO THE LADIES!—The following Articles for the Toilette have elicited General Commendation, and are confidently submitted to the Patronage of the Public as possessing a decided Excellence in their effects and appearance.

PROUT'S INDIAN RUBBER STICKING PLASTER, which does not wash off. Embracing the advantages of being waterproof and flexible, whilst the superiority of its manufacture must render it a general favourite over the old and exploded Court Plaster, which it bids fair entirely to supersede. From its peculiar flexibility it sticks firm and close on joints and other places where the Original Plaster would be useless. The present valuable article may be placed on the hands and face without renewal for several days; it is characterized by extreme tenacity of adhesion, which prevents the liability of its being washed off.

WITHER'S SICILIAN BLOOM, of Youth and Beauty, or impalpable Vegetable Powder, for improving the complexion, is recommended to the Ladies with the utmost degree of confidence, as the most exquisite production in the universe for beautifying the skin, without the possibility of the slightest injury; it is a peculiarly elegant preparation from the beautiful Azalea (a Shrub indigenous to

GLOBES.—SON, beg constantly on 5 of the above t and in great These globes h many distingui honoured with —Manufactory, may be obtaine globes, in good

WINDOW Wretts, Chintzes, of the most el house in Lond A splendid d newest designs furnished in a High Holborn Upholsterers at

SPLENDID prices in born, near Red of Green Drag Church, where of HATS and C

NEW LABEL. the most varie of Counterfeit Wrappers of ACASSAR OIL, now in circulation, and which original as frequently to deceive the unwary, in der a sense of duty, and regardless of expense in r object—the protection of the public from fraud r employed—these celebrated artists Messrs. Perkins

Typical private advertisements in general advertising lettersheets.

expensive watermarked paper. However modern research has shown these threads not to be silk but to be coloured yarn, although the name "silk thread paper" is unlikely to change now.

The Future

The rejection by the public of the Mulready design may have slowed down the initial acceptance of postal stationery but it did not prevent its future development in all aspects of the postal service, nor did it discourage the later extensive use of all types of prestamped material.

The remaining articles in this series will show that the continuing development and extensive use of Victorian postal stationery was probably as important to the development of the postal service in this country, with the benefits that it brought to the ordinary citizen, as was the earlier introduction of the Uniform Penny Post in 1840.

To be continued.

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