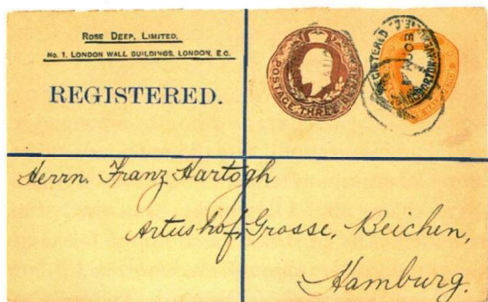


resentment to thousands of visitors from all over the world. Centennial Park was a perfect antidote to these strong nationalistic feelings. What a shame that the bombers had to choose the one spot where the Olympic spirit was truly visible for their cowardly act.

What a double shame that the bomb went off near the sculpture that is to be a permanent landmark in Centennial Park. The sculpture, entitled *Tribute*, was commissioned by the Greek American community as a special gift to the world and the state of Georgia. It was unveiled on 1 June by Archbishop Iakovos, the spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America. The 24 feet wide, 16 feet high sculpture is dedicated to the spirit of Olympism. The first figure, a naked male athlete, represents the Ancient Olympic Games; the second, wearing the long shorts of 1896, symbolises the revival of the Modern Olympic Games and the third, life-size figure shows a female runner of the late 20th century and symbolises the entry of the Olympic Games into the next millennium. A special postmark was used on 1 June to commemorate the unveiling of the sculpture. The base of the sculpture rests on ancient stones shipped from Greece – a gift from the city of Olympia.

There were only two British exhibitors at Olympihlex. Christine Earle was awarded a gold medal for her exhibit *The Grey Goose Wing* on archery, and John Murray from Glasgow received a silver bronze medal for his exhibit on the Uruguay and World Cup football ●

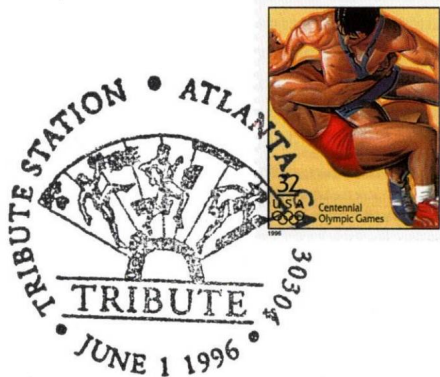
## Private stationery stamped



The two series of articles published in the *Bulletin* from September 1994-April 1995 and September 1995-August 1996 described the development of postal stationery that was prepared and sold by the Post Office. This final series will deal with the alternative, but equally important facility, that allowed privately printed material to be stamped to order, so that commercial firms and other organisations could have their own stationery manufactured to their individual requirements.

When plans for the Uniform Penny Post were being drawn up in the late 1830s, it was the Government's intention not only to sell envelopes and lettersheets produced by the Post Office, but also to allow the stamping of similar items which had been privately manufactured.

However, when postal stationery was first introduced in 1840, normal PO envelopes and lettersheets were printed by De La Rue on silk thread paper supplied by John Dickinson, which the Victorians felt was an essential anti-forgery



## to order part 1 Delayed start, by Colin Baker



measure. Of course this paper was not available to private manufacturers of envelopes and so for the first few years the PO decided not to allow the stamping of private items for fear of forgery and subsequent loss of revenue.

When the facility to allow the stamping of private stationery was eventually introduced in 1855 it quickly became very popular and was used extensively by many business for over a hundred years. By the middle of the 20th century, the alternative arrangements for the prepayment of postal charges, such as the business reply service, franking machines and bulk mailing arrangements, gradually took over. As a result, the demand from businesses for stamping private material almost completely disappeared and by 1973 the service was used mainly for philatelically inspired material. It was then that the PO decided to end stamping to order, so that after more than a century of use an important and extensive method of mail prepayment came to an end.

During the 118 years that stamping to order was available (1855-1973) almost every type of privately produced postal item had been submitted for stamping, many being elaborately illustrated and each a tiny fragment of the history of the period. Although De La Rue held the contract to print all PO stationery, the stamping of private material was carried out by the Stamping Branch of the Inland Revenue at Somerset House. The Regulations covering this service required a nominal fee to be paid above

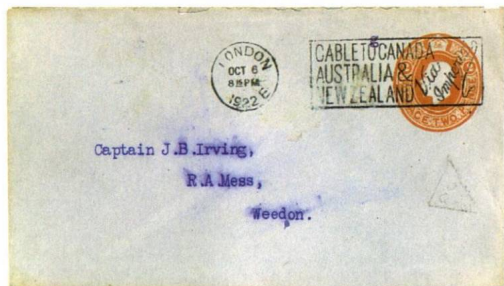
**Above left** Window envelopes (top) were very popular as they saved the effort of re-writing the address. A registered envelope (below) prepared for foreign use (2d registration fee and 2½d basic postage).

**Above** Many private firms had their envelopes lavishly printed as a form of advertising material.

the total cost of the stamps impressed on private items and, in addition, the service was only available providing a minimum number of similar stamps were to be applied.

**Private envelopes** The facility to have private envelopes and lettersheets stamped to order was finally permitted in 1855 after the PO introduced yet another measure to prevent fraud and loss of revenue, which involved including printing dates within the stamp border. At the time the PO felt

some security measure was essential, so concerned were they at the possibility of forgery. By using interchangeable date plugs it was possible to include within the stamp the actual date when it was printed. This system was successfully used with revenue stamps, but as far as postage stamps were concerned, although this might have assisted checking procedures in the printing office, it gave little protection against forgery as the printing date bore no relation to the date the stamp was finally used. It was not until 1883 that the PO accepted this and began to abandon the idea, fill-



The rate reduction of 29 May 1922: the envelope has been stamped with a triangular inspector's mark to indicate a refund of 1/2d had been made.

ing the three date holes with small florets.

To cater for the new stamping to order facility a series of dies for a variety of values was prepared, all based on the original engraving of Queen Victoria by William Wyon. Apart from the 1d and 2d dies which were already in use, all the dies initially prepared for private stamping had a different shaped border for each value to assist recognition in the post and were also printed in individual colours. As further values were added in succeeding years no new borders were prepared and, therefore, some duplication of the shape of stamps occurred, the PO then relying on colour differences alone to identify these extra values.

It was impossible for the authorities to prepare dies for every conceivable stamp value and many of the higher value envelopes required two or more impressions to make up the correct postage. It was common practice at Somerset House when applying more than one stamp to an envelope to impress the lowest value first on the right hand side and to add higher values in ascending order to the left. Although this rule was not rigidly adhered to, it can help in identifying material which may have been resubmitted for additional stamping at a later date.

Multiple stamping of Victorian envelopes incorporating up to seven impressions are known to exist, but these, and many of their counterparts with less stamps, were philatelically engineered by resubmitting material to Somerset House for additional stamping. It is difficult to envisage any envelope needing more than three impressions to make up normal postage rates; any other more unusual rates would normally have been achieved by the addition of adhesives stamps.

Window envelopes were first introduced at the turn of the century, saving a great deal of time for firms which mailed large numbers of letters

and invoices, since the delivery address was only required to be written or typed once. No specific regulations governed the use of these envelopes to inland addresses and so the facility to have them produced as postal stationery envelopes was quickly taken up, most being stamped at the basic printed paper rate applicable to the time they were used. No PO window envelopes were produced, but the privately printed versions were often lavishly illustrated with firms' logos and advertising material.

**Basic postal rates go up** The beginning of the 20th century saw Edward VII ascend the throne, but apart from a change in stamp design, the production of privately printed envelopes remained similar to those used in the Victorian period.

Edward VII's reign lasted just nine years, in 1910, George V became King. Although the start of his reign also saw little change to the use of postal stationery, the four years of war in Europe between 1914 and 1918 took their toll. Letter rates were raised twice in succession, to 1½d in 1918 and 2d in 1920, resulting in new values being impressed on private envelopes, while existing stocks were used up by the addition of adhesive stamps. Fortunately the 1½d and 2d dies for these new values were already available, having been previously used for other stamped to order material, and no delay occurred in stamping envelopes at the new rates.

In 1922 the basic postal rates were suddenly reduced to their 1918 levels, the letter rate becoming 1½d once again. Following this rate reduction many of the privately produced 2d envelopes were used to overseas destinations or for overweight letters within the British Isles, but some businesses took the opportunity of receiving a rebate on privately stamped material, the PO cancelling the envelope (rather than the stamp) with a triangular inspector's mark to show a ½d refund had been made on each item.

This reduced postal rate remained in force throughout the rest of George V's reign, continuing into the Edward VIII period. His reign was so short that there was no time to prepare any postal stationery stamps. The George V dies remained in use for 11 months until Edward's abdication in December 1936. When George VI became King the letter rate was still 1½d. Embossed stamps with the new King's head were ready by 1939 and used for stamping private material, but once again war intervened and in 1940 this forced yet another increase in postal charges, this time to 2½d for the basic rate. However, with this war set to continue for a further five years, no rate reduction was possible. In fact quite the opposite occurred, since postage rates continued to rise on a regular basis from the 1950s onwards which was reflected in the stamping of private material ●



Two window envelopes resubmitted for additional stamps due to postage rate increases. Top, printed paper rate 1½d from 1 June 1951 Below, printed paper rate 1d from 1 May 1940.

The next article will deal with postcards and newspaper wrappers and how the PO had to rap the knuckles of the stationery trade to bring them back into line.