Dummy GPO / PO Banknotes
Previously unseen training items from 45+ years ago

Obverse of crudely produced banknote.

Reverse of same banknote.

With an interest in such items going back decades, it came as a surprise to your compiler when the above item was found for sale. OK, so it’s not a dummy stamp, but it was used alongside the overprinted and decimal preparation training school stamps of the United Kingdom, as proven in the next column.

The banknote printing is traditional letterpress and is not a modern laser printed copied item. It bears a stock number of M115 on the reverse of the note. A pair sold for just £2.70, attracting four bidders. £5 and £10 versions similar to the £1 are said to exist.

Cashier with dummy banknote, 1971.

It will be seen that the cashier posing with counter sheets of dummy decimal currency stamps, postal orders and banknotes in the image above has an updated version of the green £1 banknote at bottom left (as enlarged at top left). Has anyone seen this decimal equivalent of the training banknote?
**Victory Kidder’s Hungary Essay**
*Nice item for sale, but sadly damaged*

The dummy stamp block below was produced in Britain by The Victory Kidder Printing Machine Company (not Kidde*n*, as frequently wrongly written, including on the following sale item).

The vendor (Argyll Etkin Ltd) states: “Block of 4 c1920 imperforate essay in carmine on thick glazed paper, being a printer's trial on the Victory Kidden (sic) machine. A fine marginal block of 4 - see the scan”.

![Marginal block of four.](image)

**Fine?**

Your compiler would certainly question the term ‘fine’. Well, it is if the damage to the dummy stamp in position two and to the margin is ignored!

It was for sale at $54 including postage and is rarely encountered.

As previously stated in *DS*, V-K was founded in Birkenhead in the 1800s and for many decades was an honoured name in the world of the graphic arts, with its machinery at one time found all over the world in great newspaper and general printing establishments. In 1947 it was a listed exhibitor at the British Industries Fair, specifically mentioning ‘Stamp Printing Machines’ as part of its product range. It was eventually absorbed into the Lamson-Paragon Company.

**Harrison: Booklet dummies**
*No longer just blue known in double panes*

All three colours now found as gutter blocks.

![Stamping Department Experimental](image)

**Stamping Department Experimental**
*Black is the new orange….*

Two new colours, black and orange, have been seen for sale on eBay recently. They were initially offered at £90 and £80 respectively and neither colour had been seen before by your compiler.
If you Thought that this Item was Rather Expensive Previously…

Another example is now on offer

The Harrison booklet of dummy stamps mentioned last time was originally £2,750, then £2,500, £1,750 and is currently £1,250 through Rushstamps. There appears to be no interest, even with a mighty £1,500 taken off the original price.

A second copy (cover alongside) is now for sale through eBay retailer ‘Bill’s Bargains’, USA. The asking price is US$4,500, or £3,450 at the date of writing.

It seems that the market is really ‘testing’ the limits regarding the price for this type of material and it is suspected that the latest offering will be available for some time to come. Both dealers have the items available as ‘Best Offer’ deals and it is wondered how low the price will go, assuming they ever sell.

Victoria Press Advertisement

This 1906 UK advert relates to the items in previous issues of DS
**Bruckmann:**

**Right, Left, Right**

*Alternating strip found*

For £210, users of eBay could recently secure a strip of three KEVII Bruckmann dummy stamps.

Note how the middle stamp is not a mirror image and how it lacks the guide dots that appear to the left and right of the top and bottom dummy stamps.

What else might exist? ✗

**Bruckmann:**

**A further Price Reduction**

*Another example of a serious price cut*

Further to the reduction in price on page 3, the piece alongside is down from £50 to £25 at Rushstamps.

It makes one dubious to ever pay the asking price for anything! ✗

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**Scout Jubilee, 1957**

*Attractive dummy cover on offer*

It is not often that this dummy First Day Cover is made available for sale, but one recently was offered for £199 on eBay and achieved the asking price. This cost is way above anything seen charged previously for similar covers and the Scout connection may be the reason for it achieving so much money. Incidentally, the same vendor offered the issued set of three coil leaders with 21 stamps attached for £450. ✗

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**FDC preparation underway>>**
**Congratulations to Cartor**

*Major contract won*

Cartor has recently won the contract to print every postage stamp for Denmark and Sweden for PostNord, the company that now runs the postal services in both countries, effective 2017.

The rumour factory had stated that Sweden was to stop producing intaglio printed stamps at the end of 2016, and with Cartor not printing by intaglio unless sub-contracting elsewhere, this would appear to tie-up.

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**Harrison: Colour Standards**

*Nice colour ‘chart’ recently offered*

While not a dummy item, this is an interesting piece for anyone interested in stamp production. Stamp dealer Andrew Lajer was recently selling the item shown below for £1,500. It represents the colours used on the 1937-47 British definitives and bore the (greatly enhanced) handstamp on its reverse that reads: “HARRISON & SONS LTD., / HUGHENDEN AVENUE / HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS” that validates the source of the ‘chart’.
Post and Go Wrappers
Modern version of the old ‘coil wrappers’

Post and Go stamp rolls are wrapped in a buff coloured paper and a blank stamp from within the roll is affixed to the outside to identify the contents. There is no identifying text and, sadly, the labels are not voided in any way by ISP Walsall, the printers.

Post and Go Engineering Testing
NCR machines dispense engineer’s testing material

The items shown comprise blank issued stamp stock with dummy overprinting, using an office code from the Bristol postal district and a ‘data string’ (in red ellipse below) that is identical on every impression made.

Note how 2nd class label (blue Machin) has 1st class overprint!

The office code ‘402511’ is apparently the ID of the sub-PO in Rooksbridge, Axbridge BS26 2TE, but that office does not possess P&G equipment.

A similar vendor had, about a year ago, stated: “I was lucky enough to be at a Post Office after the engineer left - with instructions for the staff to sell the [dummy testing] stamps to customers.” Clearly this is a questionable practice but, in any event, the story is unable to be substantiated.
Penny Black Sheets on Offer
Not dummies, as such, but worthy of purchasing

There is an opportunity to obtain an interesting sheet of Penny Black stamps, while helping to support The Postal Museum at the same time.

The certificate of authenticity. Sheets cost £450

“Limited edition of 45. 280mm wide, 510mm high.

This is one of a limited run of forty-five incomplete facsimile sheets of 1d black stamps printed using a replica printing plate on modern hand-made paper using the original Perkins Bacon press. These sheets are a true rarity and the only modern sheets to have been printed using the original press. The print will come with a certificate of authenticity signed by Douglas N. Muir RDP, Senior Curator of philately and Dr. Adrian Steel, Director of The Postal Museum.

In 1979 printers Bradbury Wilkinson created a new Penny Black printing plate for a television programme featuring the National Postal Museum, as it was then known - the first created since the originals in 1840.

During the 2000 international stamp exhibition in London, the printing of the Penny Black was demonstrated using this plate on the Perkins Bacon printing press, held in the collections of the British Library. However it was found that for technical reasons the complete sheet could not be printed, leaving an unprinted blank at the bottom.

After the show, these sheets were given to the museum. Your purchase will support our fundraising efforts to help make The Postal Museum a reality.

Each print is carefully wrapped in plastic film and packed in a sturdy tube to ensure safe and secure delivery. These prints are very delicate and extra care should be taken when you receive your delivery.

Please be aware we cannot accept returns.”

Harrison and Goebel, Darmstadt
Brand of press used has now been identified

The Harrison trials conducted in 1923 with NRM in The Netherlands have, to your compiler’s knowledge, never had the brand of press recorded. However, a lot on sale in Germany during September 2016 comprised a full sheet with either hand drawn horizontal lines or the use of a defaced plate (unclear), originating from the Goebel archives in Darmstadt. The lot read:

“Print sample sheet (100) in a light blue not issued postage stamp of 1d value. Springbok stamps, each row with horizontal line in colour of stamp.

“This rarity was entrusted to us by the company archives of Goebel, Darmstadt”

This item has not been seen before and adds a bit more to the story of these interesting early trials

Estimated at €100, it sold for €3,600 + €864 (24% buyers premium), or €44.64 per dummy stamp.

Full sheet of 100, with serial number. The modern Goebel premises are superimposed.
Chambon Match Covers
Not just stamp machinery!

Your compiler has always enjoyed dummy material of all kinds, not just stamp-related. Sometimes, stamps and another subject share a common bond and in the case of the dummy matchbook/box shown here, it is Chambon (now Komori Chambon), producers of stamp printing presses and, among many other machines, matchbook/box cover production equipment.

This item was produced in Britain and depicts Louis Chambon, founder, plus a line drawing of The Riverside Works, London W6, home to Chambon at the time, probably the 1960s.

A similar item, but a matchBOX dummy instead of a matchBOOK, emanating from the French arm of Chambon is shown above.

^^ Chambon DS without text.

<< 1961 Louis Chambon medal dummy with same wording as on the matchbook alongside.
**Giant Machin Heads**

*Impressive when seen life-size*

A regular reader kindly submitted four colours of the giant Machin head that was used as a part of the preparatory work for this design workhorse of the Elizabethan era. Others colours exist.

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**VK: Postage Cremona**

*British connection still unclear*

Back in issue *DS31*, mention was made of blue and of red dummy stamps understood (i.e. not confirmed) to have a British connection by allegedly having been produced in Britain by Victory Kidder on one of its stamp printing presses.

Recently, two further colours have been found as singles, namely black and green, as shown below.

Along with the red and blue colours, they were on sale at £150 for the four items.

On separate sale was a rather attractive block of 16 in green with two copies of an allegorical design to the left of the dummy stamps. This was on sale for a whopping great £418.

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**VK: More on ‘Hungary’ Design**

*New colour found*

Page two of this issue depicts a red dummy design. A blue example sold as a single for £83 with the red one, while blocks of four of both colours were £250.
Post and Go Large Labels
A new service, and label, recently added to range

Unlike the Horizon labels, which are in sheetlets of two inverted designs to enable top or bottom to be inserted into the printer ‘right way up’ each time, the new oversized P&G labels are on continuous rolls and so every label is always the same way up.

Column one of this page depicts a pair of the engineering printer test labels, while the bottom colour saturated image is of a single blank label that better shows the fading background text and, by means of a red overlaid ellipse, indicates where the year code of MA16 appears. Expect MA17 soon!

An eBay retailer stated when offering issued items on 23 September: “Bought 22nd September 2016 from the NCR Post & Go machine. I think it was possible to get them on the 20th if the office was known, otherwise this is super early for these. Everything, label and receipt, are dated.”

Two of the labels on offer on eBay.

Nothing further has been traced at this time as the material is so new. The test material and blanks shown were in your compiler’s hands on 19 September.

One final point… already these are being called NCR Horizon labels. This is rubbish, as Horizon is the counters system and nothing to do with NCRs vending equipment. So, you may wish to put ‘Horizon’ into any of your searches to ensure that you find all that is available.
The Phantasmagoria Security Printing Company
British ‘owner’ of printing house now identified

Gerald M King is the ‘owner’ of the almost mythical Phantasmagoria Security Printing Company. This was confirmed to your compiler when Mr King’s representative recently made email contact.

On GMKs outgoing mail, he uses one of the colourful labels depicted as a block of ten below.

This ‘printing company’ was first mentioned in DS24 in connection with a ‘Widow’s Mite / Mite Not’ political issue depicting The Rt. Hon. Dr James Gordon Brown MP. The PSPCo printer imprint has been used on other issues from the talented Mr King.

It’s all a bit of fun and helps show that our fine hobby should never to be taken too seriously!

More on the Dummy GPO / PO Banknotes
Chance find reveals further information

While searching for something unrelated to dummy banknotes, the scans below were traced online. A part time dealer was offering an example of the £1 banknote shown on page one of this DS for £65, with this example bearing an imprint at the foot of both sides (enlarged below). It is in poor condition.

The interesting thing about the imprint is that it appears to bear a date of 10/71, some eight months after decimalisation, and it still has G.P.O. on it, a term that went out of use on 1 October 1969 when the organisation became a public corporation. It also bears a print run figure of 20,000 (20m), and it is assumed that this relates to full sheets of the banknotes prior to cutting them up into singles.

This note could be from the bottom row, with only one imprint note per sheet perhaps existing.
Enschedé and King Willem* III of The Netherlands

*Not “Will.i.am”, the hip hop recording artist, as the spell checker wanted to change it to!!

The Goebel Darmstadt Archive continues to yield interesting items for sale, as this Enschedé item proves. Your compiler has not seen a full sheet previously on offer, just singles and blocks of four, so it is interesting to see the marginal markings that appear.

With a pre-sale estimate of €100, the sheet eventually sold for a realistic €170 + €40.80 (24% buyers premium). With 400 dummy stamps to the sheet that’s 52.7 cents each.

(The scan that was provided by the auction house of the full sheet is not accurately rendered for either of the panes, but you’ll get the general idea of how the sheet should properly look.)
Walsall Lithographic’s ‘Lithembos’
Forerunner to the Coins of Tonga and elsewhere

It is well known that the Walsall Lithographic company produced the world’s first circular stamps resembling metallic coins, initially for the island nation of Tonga.

Countries such as Sierra Leone, Jordan, Qatar, Burundi and Bhutan all followed, plus maybe others also. (Incidentally, for some years your compiler had stupidly thought that these were all produced on a self-adhesive substrate. They were not!)

What is less well known, perhaps, is that the stamps were able to be manufactured in this format so readily owing to an existing product range from Walsall. It also explains why they were such a logical choice for this type of production work….

For many decades it used to be common for companies to publicise their businesses by the use of so-called ‘poster stamps’ (advertising labels resembling miniature posters). These were invariably printed in colour on water-activated paper.

At some point Walsall Lithographic and other companies around the world, no doubt, were able to produce metallic advertising seals, often with embossing of text or other design features.

The product became known as ‘Lithembos’ in 1926 when the trademark (number 466547) was first registered. The trademark was retired in 2006.

Typical non-stamp Lithembos issued labels.

Publicity bookmark dating from circa 1950.

Further details of scans are at blackcountryhistory1 and blackcountryhistory2 web links.
New Discovery Relating to Bradbury, Wilkinson’s ‘Charlotte of Luxembourg’ Design

Bi-coloured example found in German auction sale

It is rare to come across an old dummy stamp in a new format. This well-known design had only been seen printed in one-colour until now (see brown scan in next column), whereas a pair has just been found that is bi-coloured.

The lot description reads, in German: “**Charlotte, Probedruck in Braun/Grün, tadellos postfr., senkr. Paar mit Bogenrand, sign. FSPL. (Michel: Essay).”

Google translates this as: “**Charlotte, sample print in brown / green, faultlessly post-fresh, Vertical Pair with margin of sheet, sign. FSPL. (Michel: Essay).”

The starting price was €100.00 (± £86.44), with 20% buyer’s premium to be added to the eventual price realised. (Lot still on offer at time of typing.)

It will be seen on the upper scan that the green bleeds into the brown hair and bottom right area of the dummy stamp portrait. It is suspected, therefore, that this was printed in one pass* probably using the printing press that was at BW, as made by Goebel.

*Intaglio is often thought of as a one- or, at most, two-colour process by collectors, but actually many colours (up to nine) can be printed in one pass using offsetting** and known as the ‘Serge Beaune’ method (**nothing to do with ‘offset litho’, but it does share the blanket principle, as does ‘letterset’).

So, how can you print two (or more) colours from just one printing plate? It is simple, well kind of...

1. A plate is made of the ENTIRE design (i.e. there is not a separate plate per colour used).
2. A rubber blanket is precisely cut for each colour, onto which the respective ink is placed.
3. The inks are then transferred to the precise area of the plate intended to receive those colours.
4. The inked plate then transfers its colours to the paper.

Usually, each print unit has three colours on it, with up to three units, or nine colours, feasible.

This method can result in a melding of the colours owing to the bleeding of the inks, as here.

Images taken by your compiler in France at the ITVF stand of a stamp exhibition.
In 1961 stamp dealer Muscott’s of Godalming held a stamp exhibition at the Waldorf Hotel in London.

One of the exhibitors was Harrison, who were showing their latest film on stamp production and had on display four panels depicting the photogravure process. Panel one used the Alexandra Rose dummy stamp artwork (as highlighted in the red box and on the [appalling] enlargement below it).

The imagery above is taken from a report on the show contained within a copy of the Harrison in-house magazine from the period. Apparently “In the frames were shown the original artwork, separated negatives, multi-positives, piece of screen and carbon tissue, printing plates for each colour, progressives and final block of perforated stamps, together with a step-by-step description of the process of stamp production.

“It is surprising how little philatelists know of the actual productive (sic) process in photogravure stamp printing and this exhibit helped considerably to clarify their minds.” Somewhat condescending!

The rest of the Muscott exhibition was devoted to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II stamps, “most of which had various imperfections”. Let’s hope that few of the errors and varieties on show had been on stamps printed by Harrison. Awkward!

Oh to have been able to see the panels, but your compiler was only five at the time, so can probably be excused from missing the event. Does anyone have access to the show catalogue, please?
Orchids from Walsall

A change of printer considered along the way?

County Philatelic Auctions in its 7 October 2016 auction had as Lot 2093 an interesting incomplete proof, described thus:

2093 ■ 1993 Orchids 24p imperf proof pair without value / head on glazed card, score lines to glaze, unusual. {photo} £50

What the lot description failed to mention was that the proof appears to have been created for Walsall Security Printers and not for Harrison and Sons who went on to print the issued stamp (which is superimposed above the two incomplete proofs on the above scan of the auction lot in a blank area).

Admittedly an assumption is being made, but surely “Customer No. Wal 23827” has to relate to WSP? There is probably an interesting story here!
Greetings from Timsons Ltd

Printing press manufacturer issued stamped cards

Thanks to a regular reader, mention can obliquely be made of ‘that event’ which takes place every December. However, these words are being typed three months before it takes place, so it will not be mentioned here.

(It is probably not a good thing to emulate Selfridges, especially as your compiler had written to its Chairman this year about the greed of the store opening its seasonal department some 20 weeks before the big day!)

Anyway, the two cards are basically the same, albeit that one was intended to be sent unsigned, and the other signed. Nice ephemeral items.

...and finally

I always welcome details of new dummy finds from printers past and present, and so invite you to write via my Guest Book at stampprinters.info/guestbook.htm, where requests to subscribe to DS can also be made.

Business, family and other commitments to the hobby mean that I cannot guarantee that I can rigidly stick to a publishing programme and therefore suggest that you visit stampprinters.info/dummystamps.htm every so often where PDF files of this and all future and previous issues of Dummy Stamps will be available to download and print-off.

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