

of Great Britain's Smallest Postage Stamp



Specimen
Plate 10

The 1870 Halfpenny Rose Red

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Robson Lowe Vol 1.
me 1, Stanley Gibbons
tish Stamps, 1840-1940, James A. McKay

Exhibit Plan

Solo (Intended) Uses

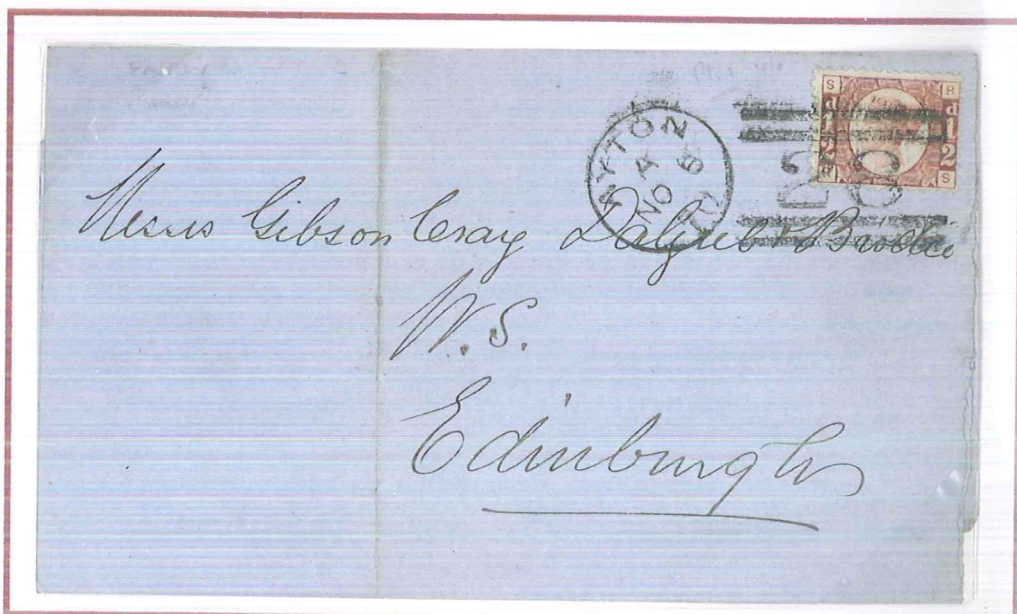
Printed Matter & Post Card	1-2
Wrapper	3
Book Post	4

Multiples

Newspaper	5
Domestic Letter	6
Oversized & Foreign	7
Domestic Registered Letter	8

Mixed

Domestic Registered Letter	8
Foreign Letter	9-10
Upated Stationery Foreign Use	11
Late Use & Epilogue	12



Printed Matter early use of the halfpenny rose red, Plate 1, November, 1870, Ayton, Scotland.

Uses of Great Britain's Smallest Postage Stamp



Specimen
Plate 10

The 1870 Halfpenny Rose Red

Purpose

This single frame exhibit shows uses and explains the printing and plate numbers of Great Britain's first halfpenny postage stamp. It was the smallest stamp issued by Great Britain. The exhibit is presented on 12 oversized pages.

Organization

The uses are organized by Solo (one stamp) use on cover, Multiples (more than one halfpenny stamp on the cover) and Mixed (the halfpenny stamp used with other stamps) franking to pay the intended rates.

History

The halfpenny stamp, issued on October 1, 1870, was introduced following a reduction in the postal rate for newspapers and other printed matter. It was designed to be approximately half the size of the corresponding one penny stamp. The stamps are nicknamed "Bantams" due to their small size of 17.5 x 14 mm.

To prevent forgery, the stamps have an intricate design and include very small plate numbers. Within the exhibit, items shown represent each plate number issued. An enlargement of the tiny plate number is shown, as well as a chart of the printing quantities by plate. In 1880 a new halfpenny stamp replaced this issue after nine years of use.

Guide

Plate numbers indicated for each cover. Descriptions of cancels and rate related information is briefly detailed. Rare items are double boxed.

References

Encyclopedia of the British Empire, Robson Lowe Vol 1.
Great Britain, Queen Victoria, Volume 1, Stanley Gibbons

Exhibit Plan

Solo (Intended) Uses

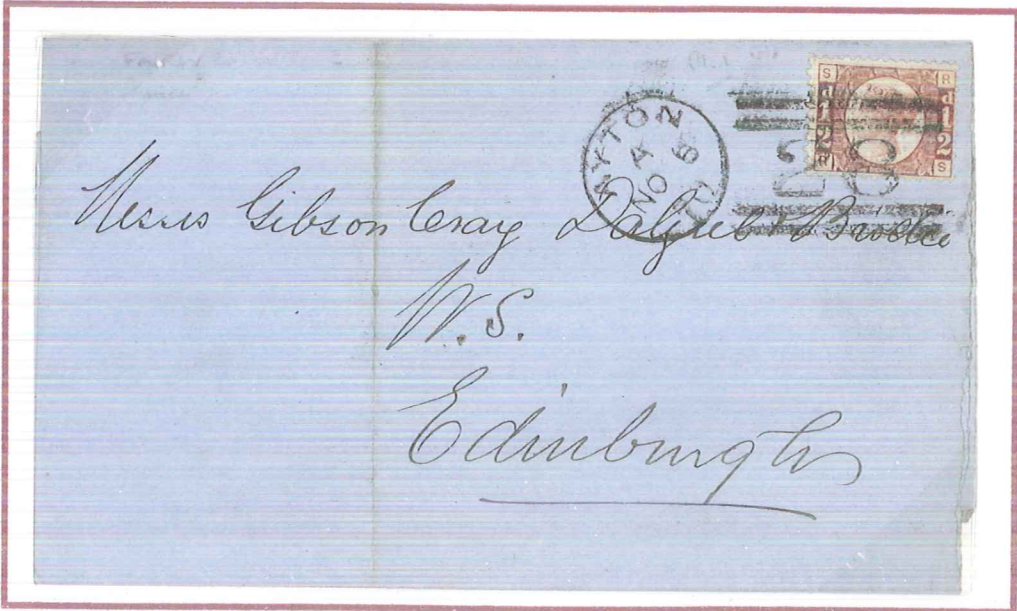
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Printed Matter early use of the halfpenny rose red, Plate 1, November, 1870, Ayton, Scotland.

Halfpenny Solo Uses

The Halfpenny Rate

In 1870, the rate reduction from one penny to halfpenny for domestic newspapers and other domestic printed matter created the need for the halfpenny stamp.

The Halfpenny Stamp

Image: Line engraved by Perkins Bacon printers, featured a bust of Queen Victoria in profile with '1/2d' on either side of the Queen.

Color: Rose red with infrequent shades to dark rose red on paper white and without blue tones.

Printing: Sheets of 480 stamps with 20 horizontal rows of 24. Corner check letters identify the position of the stamp on each plate and run from AA to XA, then AT to XT and alternately AA to AX, then TA to TX.

Watermark: Script "half penny" spans every three stamps.



Perforations: Unlike previous values, the sheets were perforated vertically. The comb contained 21 rows of pins perforated 24 rows. This created marginal imperforates, example shown.

SCHOOL FOR THE INDIGENT BLIND,
ST. GEORGE'S FIELDS, SOUTHWARK.
ELECTION FOR NOVEMBER, 1871.

The favour of your votes and interest is earnestly solicited on behalf of

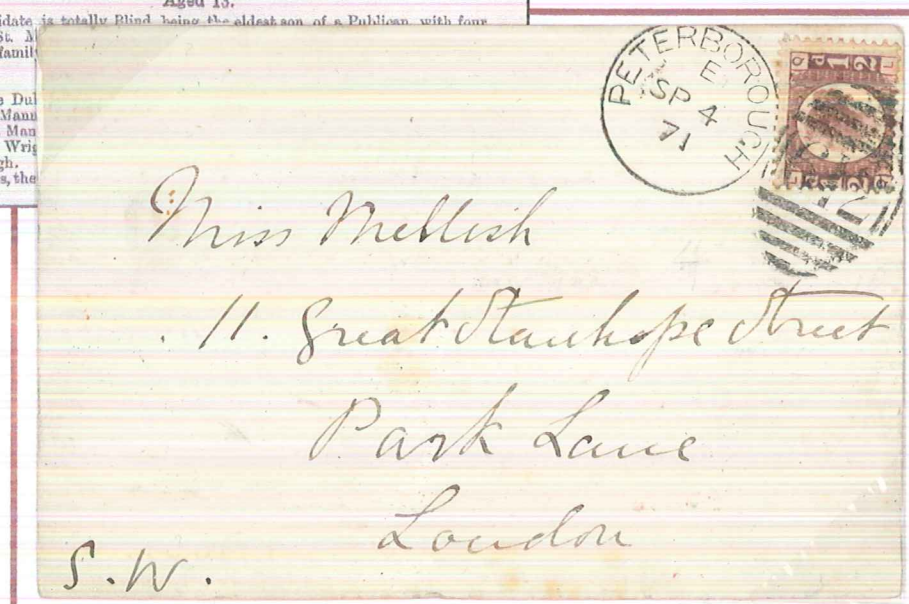
WILLIAM RICHARD PETCHHEY,
Aged 13.

The Candidate is totally Blind, being the eldest son of a Publican, with four children in St. M. maintain his family.

His Grace the Duke of Devonshire
Lord George Mann
Lady Adelaide Mann
The Rev. A. Wright
Petersborough.
Mrs. Saunders, the

Reverse pre-printed,

Scan at 75% Deep Rose Red ↓



Printed Matter post card solo use, Plate 4, Petersburg duplex cancel, September 1871.

Printed Matter & Post Card

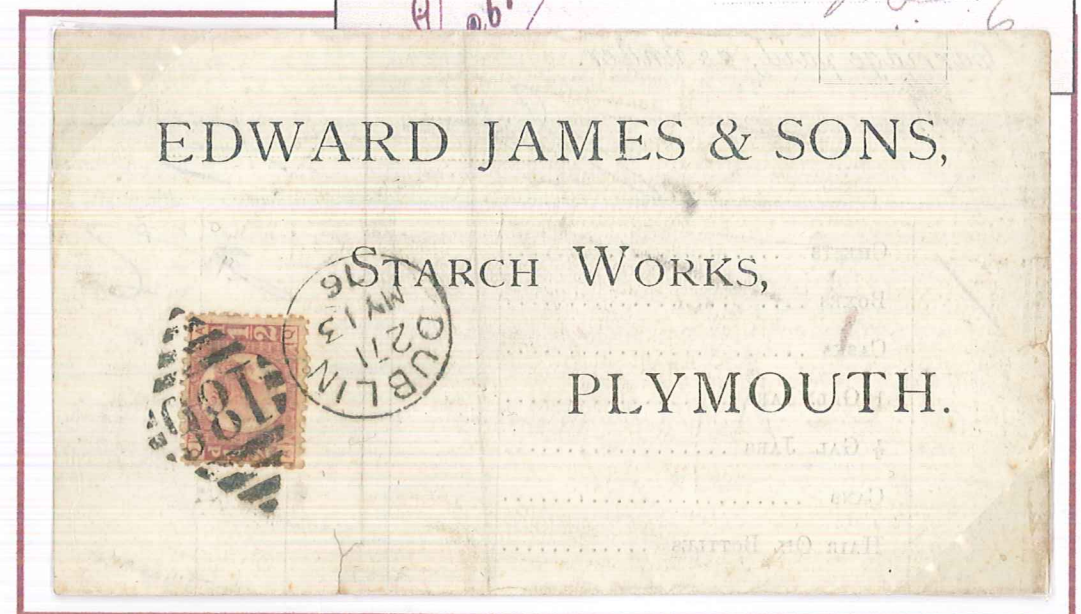
Notation →

"If sent by halfpenny post, to be folded but not sealed."

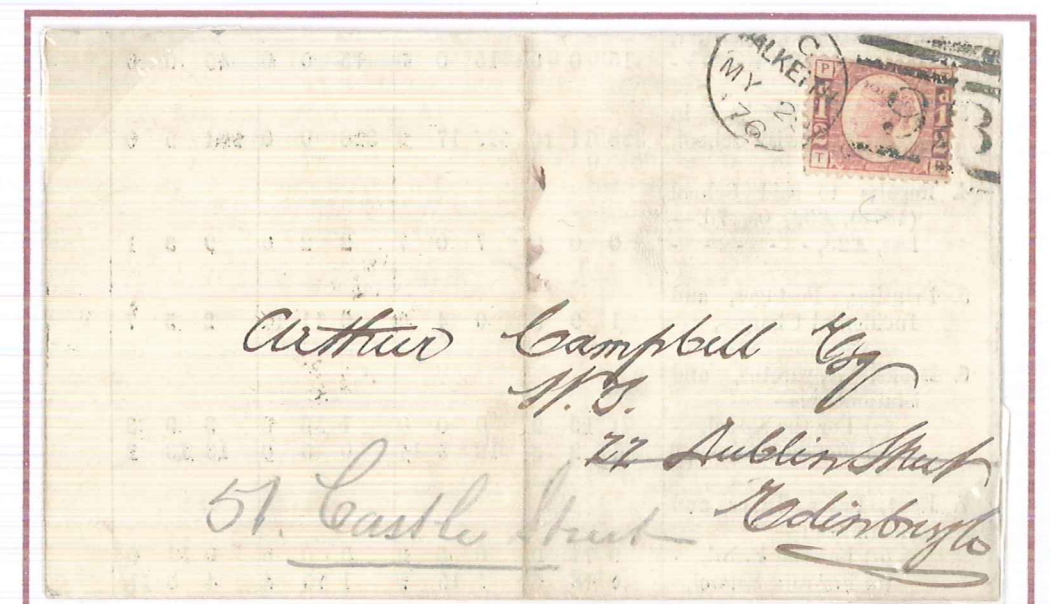
Reverse scan at 75%

RETURNED EMPTIES to be advised on this form, Credit Note will then be sent in due course.

[If sent by halfpenny post to be FOLDED] [If not SEALED.]



Printed Matter solo use, Plate 12, Dublin Pearson Hill diamond numeral duplex cancel, May 1876.



Printed Matter solo use, Plate 6, Edinburgh four bar duplex cancel, May 1876. Rate allowed forwarding without additional charge. Inside: Dalkeith School Board financial report.

Halfpenny Solo Uses

Wrapper

Relative Rarity of Plate Positions:

Plate 9 is was rarely used. It was a reserve or back up plate.

Put to press October 9, 1871, with an estimated 50,000 sheets printed.

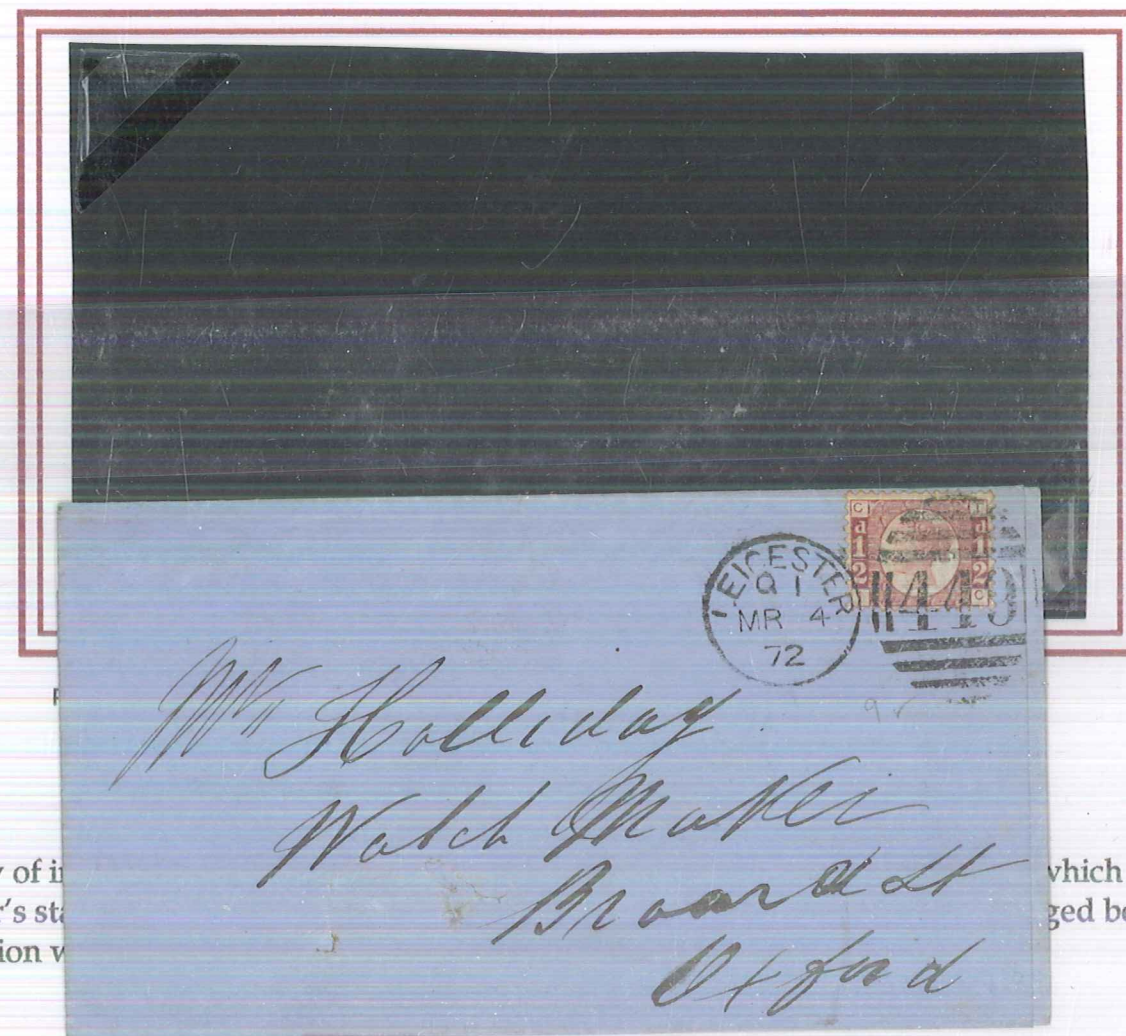
Other plates had print quantities of around 200,000 to over 500,000. Fifteen plates were used, numbered from 1 to 20 with the exception of plates 2, 7, 16, 17, and 18 which were not completed.



Spotting the plate numbers:

With 3x magnification a very clear 9 seen engraved into the left and right side lace work pattern.

Solo Use Cover – Plate Nine



Throw Away Mail:

Added to the relative rarity of wrappers. From a collector's standpoint, they suffer from heavy obliteration v

which was for printed matter and aged because of poor perf tearing and

Halfpenny Solo Uses

Book Post

The Plate Numbers:
Printing Dates &
Quantities



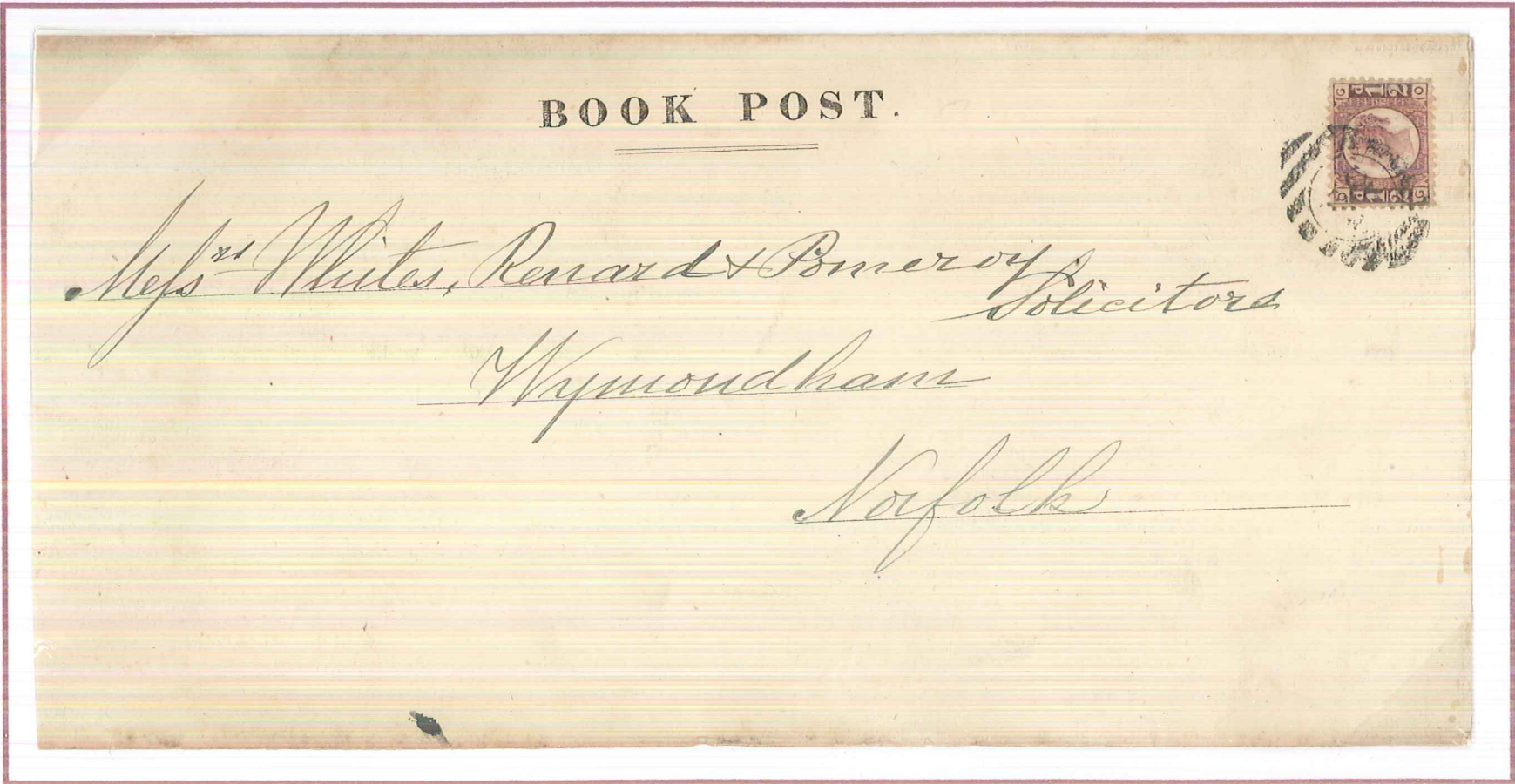
The TINY (1 mm) plate numbers appear within the design just inside of the 1/2d rate marking.

Plate	Printing Dates	Sheets Printed e = estimated	Page Guide To covers shown within this Exhibit
1	June 20, 1870	121,500	Page 1, Title Page Wrapper, Early Use Page 8, Registered Letter
3	June 28, 1870	192,500	Page 9, Registered Stationery Page 9, Mourning Cover to the US
4	July 4, 1870	264,600	Page 2, Post Card, Solo Use
5	July 12, 1870	533,200	Page 6, Domestic Letter to Scotland
6	July 19, 1870	402,100	Page 7, Overweight Domestic Letter
8	Not recorded	120,000 e	Page 2, Printed Matter Solo Use
9	October 9, 1871	Only 50,000 e	Page 10, Foreign Letter to Turkey Page 3, Printed Matter, Key Rarity
10	October 2, 1873	386,100	Page 10, Foreign Letter to Spain
11	January 21, 1874	411,000	Page 1, Title Page Specimen Page 6, Domestic Letter
12	June 29, 1874	400,000 e	Page 2, Printed Matter, Solo Use Page 5, Newspaper to Paris, France
13	May 6, 1876	300,000 e	Page 4, Book Post, Page 8 Foreign Letter
14	Nov. 16, 1876	250,000 e	Page 11, Uprated Postal Card Page 12, Domestic Letter, Late Use
15	May 6, 1878	200,000 e	Page 9, Foreign Letter to Germany Page 15, Foreign Letter to the US
19	July 18, 1878	175,000 e	Page 6, Domestic Letter, Vertical Pair
20	June 27, 1879	150,000 e	Page 11, Uprated Stationery to Italy Page 11 Uprated Wrapper

Note:
Plates 2, 7,
16, 17 and 18
were not
completed.

Only 15
plates were
used.

Essentially a
large wrapper →
The book post
rate allowed
heavier items at
the printed
matter rate.



Half Penny Multiple Uses

Newspaper



Foreign Newspaper rate 1d (for onward mailing to Paris), two copies Plate 12. Initially addressed to Yorkshire. Paper dated March 6, 1880 sent onward to Paris April 30, 1880.

Unusual: received paper, re-addressed and sent onward to foreign destination.

"The Australasian" printed in Melbourne. Shipped by P&O Steamer *Deccan* at Melbourne and carried Adelaide 7 March, Galle, Ceylon 23 March, further carried by P&O Steamer *Khedive* 24 March at Galle, 6 April, Suez and arrival Southampton 23 April, where after delivery sent onward by recipient to Paris April 30th.

Halfpenny Multiple Uses

A common multiple use of the halfpenny stamp was a pair paying the domestic letter rate. These examples show horizontal and vertical orientation and four different plate numbers.

Domestic Letter Rate Two Stamps



Two stamp horizontal pair use, Plate 10. Edinburgh duplex cancel, November 1877. The dotted circle date stamp was an accountability indicator used in **Scotland** to identify mail collected from pillar boxes, thus cancelled and processed next day.



Letter Rate, two stamp vertical pair use, Plate 4. Leeds, England cds duplex with eight bar numeral obliterator to Dundee, Scotland, September 1873.



Letter Rate, two stamp vertical pair use, Plate 11. Oval bar obliterator, Minehead cds on reverse. June, 1876, transit Seaton and delivery Axminster next day.



Two stamp vertical pair use, Plate 19. Used in **Wales**: Haverford cds duplex with eight bar numeral obliterator to Fishguard, March 1879.

Half Penny Multiple Uses

Oversized and Foreign Letter Rate

Each rate required the use of a halfpenny in its rate, for these covers the entire rate was paid with halfpenny adhesives.



Overweight Domestic Letter, multiple use with vertical pair and single, 1½d rate paid, three copies Plate 5, Glasgow four bar duplex numeral cancel, December 1872.



Foreign Letter to France, 2½d rate, all copies Plate 13. July 1878 London Duplex date stamp with diamond numeral.
Block of four franking challenging to find intact on cover.

Halfpenny Multiple & Mixed Uses

Domestic Registered Letters



Registered Domestic Letter, 3½d rate: 2d Registered linen envelope, size F, 2d indicia reverse, 1½d letter, Plate 3, Colchester Registered cds January 1879.

Large Multiple Franking: Block of Six, Horizontal Pair, Vertical Strip

Block of six→

Note imperforate
right side

This occurs at the
vertical row, right
side margin,
shown on seven
stamps on this



Registered Overweight Domestic Letter: Rate: 5½d: 1½d letter, 4d Registration. All Plate 1 April, 1877 Alnmouth 101 numeral obliterator sent to London.

Halfpenny Mixed Uses

Foreign Letter Rate

The foreign letter rate of two and a halfpenny is a common way to find the halfpenny stamp used with mixed with other definitives to make the rate.

Deep Rose Red ↓



Foreign Letter, 2½d rate to US, Plate 15. St. Ives Hunts duplex, September, 1880. Minnesota destination with horizontal pair of Plate 190 one penny adhesives.



Foreign Letter, 2½d rate to US, Plate 3. Wide banded mourning cover. Birmingham duplex cancel, April 1878. New York destination with two singles of the one penny adhesives, plates 201 and 207.



Foreign Letter, 2½d rate to Germany, Plate 15, Edinburgh Star six bar obliterator, February 1877. The eight pointed star on either side of the 131 used only from the Edinburgh GPO used with a vertical pair of Plate 160 one penny adhesives.

Halfpenny Mixed Uses

Foreign Letter Rate

Foreign Destination Letter to Turkey—Plate Eight



Foreign destination letter to Smyrna, Turkey, 2½d rate, Plate 8, Southampton duplex, September 1875 with a single of the two penny adhesives, Plate 14. Plate 8 is the second most challenging plate, with an estimated 120,000 printed.

Double Rate Foreign Destination to Spain



Double rate using double franking vertical pairs of each adhesive.

Double weight Foreign destination wrapper to Spain, 5d rate paid ½d vertical pair Plate 10, and vertical pair 2d blue, London West W57 duplex cancels, July 1870 with a vertical pair of the two penny adhesives, Plate 15.

Halfpenny Mixed Uses Uprated Stationery for Foreign Destinations

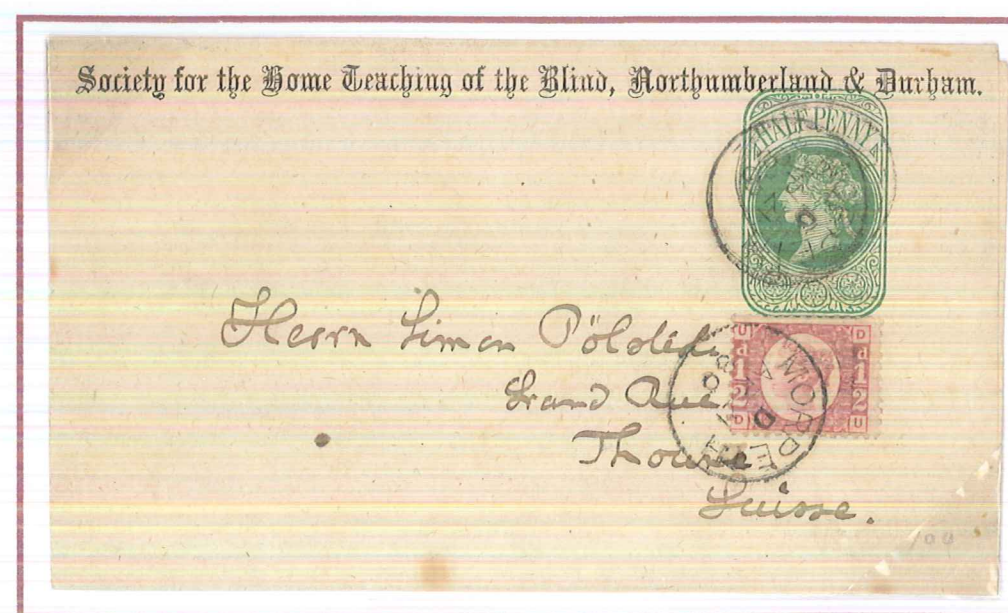
The convenience of the halfpenny stamp is shown here in the multiplicity of uses in uprating stationery initially intended for domestic use, and uprated for foreign destinations.



Post Card uprated for foreign use to Holland, 1d rate, Plate 13 Wolverhampton obliterator and oval P.17 carrier handstamp, no apparent cancel on the halfpenny, July 1876.



Uprated 1d pink stationery envelope for foreign letter to Italy. Rate 2½d made up with ½d Plate 19, and 1d red Plate 168. Canceled with Dunfermline canceler 113 May 1876.



½d Wrapper uprated with ½d adhesive, Plate 20 for 1d rate to Switzerland. Wrapper indicium and adhesive each canceled with a struck of the Morpeth thimble datestamp of April, 1880.

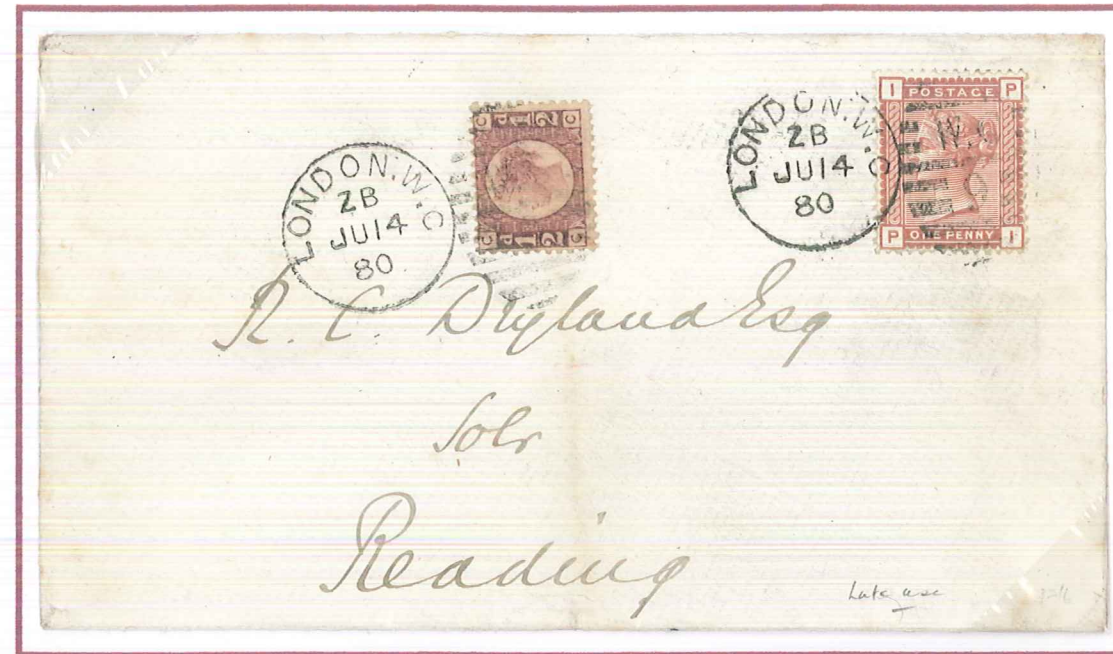


½d Wrapper uprated for weight and destination: France, 2d rate, ½d red Plate 15, and one penny Plate 177. All canceled with Glasgow nine bar 159 obliterator, faint red Paris receiver.

Halfpenny Mixed Uses

Late Use and Epilogue

Late Mixed Use of Halfpenny Rose Red



1½d Overweight letter, franked with ½d Plate 14 and 1880 series 1d Venetian Red, this and subsequent issues with no plate numbers, canceled with London W.C. duplex, July 1880.

EPILOGUE—A New Issue and Its a Standard Size

The 1870 halfpenny red rose stamp was replaced in 1880 after nearly ten years of use by the surface printed halfpenny green adhesive.

The smaller format stamp was not reissued, and the fine engraving was supplanted by surface printing.

The halfpenny rose red is remembered and appreciated for its unique contribution to British Victorian philately.



Printed Matter: ½d paid with the halfpenny green, Edinburgh duplex cancel, December 1881.