

Notes on the ½d Green Table

All information and numbers as quoted in the ½d Green Table in the PSM Magazine Dec. Issue, page 38 are to be found in the Invoices reproduced on pages 39 to 42 which I, with my wife, copied from the (volumes) 83 Day Books of Messrs. De La Rue, in the archives of the London Post Office, on two different occasions.

As the P.S.M Magazine is printed by means of a photo-set process, in order not to re-type and re-set the various columns, use was made of some of the columns as they appear in the table of the ½d Green as published by Clive Smith in his publication 'The Victoria Half-Penny'. The table published in the P.S.M. Magazine is not a faithful *in toto* reproduction of what appears in Smith's publication, as the one published in the P.S.M. Magazine contains the important information about supply No. 30, which was in yellow, not included in Mr. Smith's table of page 72.

(Most probably this was done on purpose as he was examining in this table of page 72, the ½d Green supplies, and passed on from Supply No. 29 to 31, mentioning nothing about Supply 30 in yellow. On the other hand in the table examining the ½d yellow supplies page 43, he does mention that the 29th supply was in green).

I attribute great importance to the inclusion of this 30th printing in yellow as in the past it was missed by John Eastman in his De La Rue History of British and Foreign Postage stamps (1885 – 1901) on behalf of the Royal Philatelic Society.

In my introduction when writing the series about 'The Evolution of the One Half Penny Queen Victoria Yellow Stamp' in 1976, for the P.S.M. Magazine Vol. 6, page 13. I said:

In 1958 John Eastman published 'The De La Rue History of British and Foreign Postage Stamps 1885 – 1901' on behalf of the Royal Philatelic Society, and devoted two full pages page 250 and 360 to the Queen Victoria ½d yellow. Eastman missed the 30th printing. There were actually twenty nine yellow printings, and one green printing and not twenty eight yellow printings as claimed by Eastman, and between the 28th and 30th there was a ½d Green printing, which De La Rue delivered on the 20th June etc.

On the 1st December, 1960, Major Fred Orme, T.D., published his paper 'Malta Half-Penny Centenary'. My reproduction of the Invoices and correspondence from the Archives of the British Postal Museum, hoped to establish once and for all the number of printings, and to allay the fears of those who doubt Major Orme's classification.

In order to achieve this I wanted to find concrete proof, and record it. With nothing less than such detail will, the ever doubting minds of philatelists be once and for all satisfied.

The above was very important as prior to 1976, when the article on the ½d yellows was written, there were all kinds of opinions being put forward as to the actual number of printings.

The proof vindicating Ormes's classification, (which was published by Major Fred Orme T.D. on the 1st December, 1960 as a supplement to The Philatelist and Postal Historian) and that the 30th printing in yellow was wedged in between the 29th and 31st printing in green, in other words the 1st

and 2nd supply of the ½d green, was achieved by recording and publishing for the 1st time:

- a) The De La Rue **DAY BOOK** Lettering (Volume);
- b) The **PAGE** Number, where each separate invoice was to be found from the 1st supply onwards in chronological order; and
- c) The narration of the sequence of events backed up by the official correspondence quoted from the records.

This work was published in serial form in the P.S.M. Magazine 1976, Vol. 6 onwards.

This De la Rue **DAY BOOK** Lettering and **PAGE** where each separate invoice was to be found in chronological order was published again as a heading to each separate invoice in chapter 9 of the Malta Study Hand Book, which chapter was written by me, with the exception of the varieties section written by the late Mrs. Turnbull of Australia.

The sequence of the events leading to the order of all the invoices backed up by the Official Correspondence, was published in the P.S.M. Magazine, Vol. 7, No. 3, of Autumn, 1977, chapter 8, and later published again in chapter 9, pages, 96, 97, 98, of the Malta Study Circle Hand Book, as follows;

The 27th printing was issued in Malta in 1883. The earliest recorded copy is 4th August 1883 and the latest one is 23rd September 1884.

In 1883 it was decided that the time had come for the Malta Post Office to be controlled internally. (The original date proposed for the transfer was July 1884.)

On 4th September 1883, Roger Duke, the Post Master General in Malta, wrote to the Hon. Walter Hely Hutchinson, C.M.G. requesting "approximate quantities of the several denominations of stamps which will have to be provided for use after Transfer," adding "I have just been informed that it has been decided to have certain stamps of uniform colour throughout the Postal Union, i.e., the ½d in green," etc.

On 8th September 1883 the Chief Secretary, Walter Hely Hutchinson, wrote to the Crown Agents in London informing them of the request of the Maltese Post Master General. On 26th September 1883 De La Rue returned the above-mentioned correspondence, giving the necessary information. From this letter it follows that the printing plate used for the ½d green was the same as that for the ½d yellows as among other details we find "A printing plate is in existence here for the ½d stamps, so that it becomes necessary to provide only for producing five denominations (1d, 2d, 2½d, 4d and 1/-)."

On 27th November 1883 the Chief Secretary of Malta requested the Crown Agents to supply Malta with 200 sheets of halfpenny postage stamps and enclosed a requisition. This was received by the Crown Agents on 5th December 1883 and written in the margin is the following note: "Instruct Messrs. De La Rue that having regard to the correspondence respecting the new stamps, generally we may assume that the Malta Government approves of the ½d stamps being printed in green as recommended." From the correspondence it is clear that the Crown Agents did not realise that this requisition was a separate and distinct one from the correspondence that had just passed between Malta and London for the issue of stamps after "the date the Post Office was to pass to internal control", and they assumed quite wrongly that this requisition was to be in green. This information was passed to the printers. Consequently, on 10th December 1883 the Crown Agents transmitted this requisition, stating "We herewith beg to return the requisition covered by your letter of yesterday for 200 sheets of ½d Malta Postage Stamps, which you inform us are to be printed in green, etc."

On 13th December the Crown Agents informed the Chief Secretary in Malta that the printing was going to be in green, which must have upset Roger Duke, the Post Master in Malta, considerably, as the Chief Secretary, on 31st December 1883, replied to the Crown Agents as follows: "The Post Master reports much inconvenience will result if green half-penny stamps be introduced before the transfer of the Post Office to Colonial control, and I am therefore to request that you will be so good as to give the necessary instructions for a supply of yellow stamps, the green ones which you have already ordered being kept for future use."

On 11th January 1884 the Crown Agents placed a new requisition for a supply of yellow stamps. On 14th January 1884 Messrs. De La Rue informed the Crown Agents that the original order of the 10th requesting a green printing had not yet been executed, and so the colour of this printing would be yellow. On 16th January 1884 the Crown Agents approved this letter.

28th Invoice 29th January, 1884.
 The Crown Agents for the Colonies
 Malta Postage Stamps
 200 sheets of 240 duty $\frac{1}{2}$ d = 48,000
 Case lined tin

3	4	0
	4	6
<hr/>		
3	8	6
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This printing was issued in Malta in 1884. The earliest recorded copy is 19th March 1884 and the latest one is 26th August 1884. Reversal of date slugs 14th May and 16th May have been recorded.

On 29th May 1884 the Chief Secretary wrote to the Crown Agents requesting various quantities of postage stamps and postal stationery stating "*The Post Office is to be handed over in July, etc.*" On 3rd June the Crown Agents requested De La Rue to print the quantities (which included the halfpenny green) mentioned and De La Rue replied on 4th June stating "*That a good supply should reach Malta by the end of this month. The requisition to complete will take from six to eight weeks from now.*"

The invoice covering this 29th printing (which is in green) is in the De La Rue Day Book M on page 72, 23rd June 1884, 688 sheets of 240 duty $\frac{1}{2}$ = 165,120 stamps plus 100 specimens.

The Post Office was not, however, transferred in July as had originally been planned, and so the Malta Government, although they had now an ample supply of $\frac{1}{2}$ d green, once again ran short of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellows, and on 8th August 1884 the Chief Secretary requested the Crown Agents to supply the "*Usual 200 sheets of Malta local Postage Stamps*". On 18th August the Crown Agents placed the order with De La Rue for 200 sheets of $\frac{1}{2}$ d adding "*I have to add that the colour of the stamps is to be in Yellow*". This letter was acknowledged by De La Rue on 19th August and their Private Day Book M, page 92, shows that this last printing of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow stamps was dispatched to Malta on 27th August 1884.