



## Adhiparasakthi Philatelic Society

Adhiparasakthi Educational Institutions, G.B.Nagar, Kalavai-632 506, Vellore District

# NEWS LETTER

Letter Number : 03

17<sup>th</sup> March, 2009

Ref : STK - 01

Page 1 of 1

*Prepared by Prof. Dr. Vra. Saathappan, Philatelist, Numismatist and Notaphylist*



### STAMP TALK Penny Black

I am **PENNY BLACK**, the world's first postage stamp issued for a public postal system, talking to you. **Sir Rowland Hill**, an educationist is considered to be my father. Hill saw the irregularities in the existing postal system of Great Britain, which caused negative revenue for the government and issued a pamphlet titled "**Post Office Reforms; Its Importance and Practicability**" on 13<sup>th</sup> February in the year 1837, which insisted on a uniform postage irrespective of the weight of the letter and the distance of delivery. Hill also gave an idea of issuing an envelope for carrying letters. Hill's concept was accepted and he was given a two year contract to run the system. Hill along with Henry Cole ran a competition to find a good design for me. 2600 entries were received and none was convincing to Hill. Finally Hill launched the services in all post offices on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1840 with an envelope designed by the artist William Mulready. He also issued me on the same day. I was bearing the profile of the British Monarch, Queen Victoria. This idea of the profile of the monarch on me was conceived in the thoughts of Hill and was issued for public use on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1840.

The profile of Queen Victoria which was printed on me was engraved by Charles and Fredrick Heath based on the sketch provided by Henry Corbould. In turn, the sketch was based on the cameo-like head by William Wyon, which was designed for a medal used to commemorate the visit of Queen Victoria to the city of London in 1837, the year of Her coronation.

I was printed using the line engraved printing method from 11 plates numbered 1 to 11. Plate No.1 deteriorated quickly and was



Maltese Cross



Crown Watermark



Two Pence Blue

repaired to such an extent that it is generally considered as two separate plates -No.1a and No.1b - making 12 plates in total from which I was printed. Each plate consisted of 240 stamps of me in 20 rows and 12 columns. My position on the sheet was identified by two letters in the front bottom corners. The left corner letter identifies the row and the right corner identifies the column.(i.e)



Jacob Perkins' D cylinder press, which printed the Penny Black and the 2d Blue

AA,AB,AC .....AL for top row BA,BB,...BL for second row and so on till the bottom row as TA,TB,TC,.....TL.[There were 240 pence in a Pound (£), 12 pence to a shilling and 20 shillings to a Pound.] Thus 1 full sheet of me (240 stamps) will cost one Pound, ½ sheet of me



Red Maltese cross on a Black Penny

(120) cost 10 shillings, and one row of me (12) cost a shilling.

To prevent forgery, I had a small crown watermark on my back and check letters in front bottom corners. I was printed in 2,86,700 sheets in a year totaling to 68,808,000 stamps. I am not a rare stamp but finding me in a good condition with uniform margin is very rare.



Penny Red with a black oval obliterator containing a number

I was initially cancelled

by a red Maltese Cross cancellation, however this was difficult to see and easy to remove. Changing to black ink cancellation was still more difficult to see. Hence I was replaced by Penny Red and printed from the 12<sup>th</sup> plate from January 1841. The word "POSTAGE" was printed at the top and "ONE PENNY" at the bottom of me. Since I was the first stamp, country's name was not printed. In remembrance of me, till today all British stamps bear a profile of the reigning monarch somewhere on the design looking always towards the left. When I was born, I was called as a postage label, not as a stamp. I have a sister who was born with me, two pence blue. Thank you friend. See you.