

ELUSIVE EVERETTS

By Mike J. Burrows.

At the 12th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain held at Cambridge in 1926, Dr. Grodon Ward presented his paper 'Thief - Proof Stamps & Legitimate Philately'. Part of this discourse concerned the Everett stamp thief detector. Later this information was incorporated in the series by Bertram McGowan that appeared in the British Philatelist during 1926-27.

Charles Jennings gave a very full description of the device in his article 'Security Endorsement Machines & Processes' published by the Society in News-Sheet No.6, May-June 1958 (out of print). Further facts, amendments and amplification can be found on pages 29 and 30 of his magnum opus published in parts beginning in 1968.

Mention of the underprint was made by member Dr. Reg. W. Powell in 'A K.E.VII. Miscellany' which can be found in the G.B. Journal, Volume 13, page 14.

For members who do not have access to the above references, here is a brief description of the apparatus patented by Arthur Everett of William Henry Everett & Son Limited, wholesale news-vendors of 11, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.

An ink roller-pad was kept in contact with a rubber roller containing-rows of the required insignia. Each row had six of these dies. In this case the initials WH/E&S/Ltd. By using the hand-machine in a similar manner to the rubber roller multi-colour stampers of today, it was possible to overprint, on top of the gum, several postage stamps in a single operation.

It had taken many years before Everetts persuaded the Post Office to accept this form of private protection. Permission being finally granted in 1903. In an attempt to publicize the invention it was offered for sale in the contemporary press at £1 each, but it is doubtful if any were ever sold.

Bearing in mind that the ink used was probably that normally associated with the conventional rubber stamps then in use, and that the impressions were made over the gum, it is doubtful if any legitimately used examples could still exist, considering that they would have to be removed from the original material to which they had been affixed. Furthermore, any mint examples might still be considered the property of the security conscious originators.

Nevertheless, the following are recorded as having been seen, over the years, with this security device, overprinted either in purple or violet. Whether mint or used was not stated.

K.E.VII. ½d dark green, 1d, 1½d., 2d ordinary paper, 2½d, 6d
K.G.V. 1d die III.

By 1915 the war had made such inroads into the staff that most had been replaced by less reliable casuals, resulting in the management deciding to conform to the more normal method of security by having its stocks of stamps perfined with a large single E.

Although Dr. Gordon Ward gave this information in 1926, the new illustrated catalogue does not carry this identification. For a company that has attracted the attention of several philatelic writers, it does seem that the products of W.H. Everett & Son Limited security methods are destined for oblivion.