

SOS Signal

Thomas De La Rue and Some SOSs of His Early Gems

By Harry Skallerup

The SOS Signal is now issued three times per year in February, June and October. Articles and information about stamps on stamps is ardently solicited because it is the lifeblood of the publication. Please contact the editor who can put you in print! Your suggestions and input are always welcome.

In 1987 the Bailiwick of Guernsey issued a set of four SOS stamps honoring Thomas De La Rue, renowned postage stamp and currency

printer, who was born there in 1793 (Sc #56-59), Fig. 1). Although his portrait is identified on each stamp as "The Guernsey Printer," his professional life's story was more like "Local boy makes good in the big city" because he left for London in 1821 after terminating his first publishing venture (a French language newspaper), and as the cliché goes, "he never looked back." However, 150 years later, Guernsey had good reason to make the claim and honor its native son with the issue of these stamps because the company De La Rue founded in his name was to gain a worldwide reputation as a premiere security printer; and it was to stand out in other innovative and successful endeavors as well.

The mid-century years of De La Rue's expanding busi-

ness were selected by Guernsey to highlight the historic gems he printed for Great Britain, Hong Kong, Italy, and the Confederate States of America.

Thanks to Roland Hill's breakthrough idea of the penny post and the advent of the Penny Black, De La Rue was able to position his firm as an innovative competitor in the field of postage stamp printing.

In 1855 he introduced the use of typography in the printing of British postage stamps with the 4-Penny Carmine (GB Sc #22) bearing the likeness of Queen Victoria. In this process, now referred to as surface or letter press printing, ink is applied to paper from a raised surface and is the opposite of engraving, where ink is applied from hollows cut into a plate. Although typography brought with it economical and other advantages, it did not supplant other production methods in subsequent years. The 4-Penny Carmine is the SOS in the Guernsey set. It was

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2

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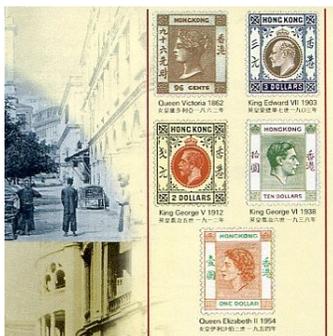


Fig. 3

“Guernsey again honored De La Rue in 1993 with a set of five stamps and booklets for the bicentennial of his birth.”



Fig. 4

also reproduced in a set of three stamps by Great Britain in 1970 (Sc #642-644) showing the historic progression of its early postage stamps from engraved to embossed to typographic production - each a philatelic first (Fig.2).

In 1862 the firm added Hong Kong to the growing number of British-related political entities that it served by printing its first seven postage stamps. The 2-cent Hong Kong (Sc #1) is the one that appears in the Guernsey set bearing the bust of Queen Victoria. Another stamp from this first issue, the 96-cent denomination (Sc #7), was reproduced by Hong Kong on a souvenir sheet (Sc #792), showing nine "selected definitive stamps 1862-1997" (Fig. 3). It was issued on the last day of British authority there on June 30, 1997. Also, another of the first stamps appeared earlier in 1991 as a minuscule SOS (Sc #600 [type A1] in a set celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Hong Kong Post Office (#600-605).

During these decades, De La Rue's firm was also expanding its services to foreign countries as well. In 1863 the company printed ten early stamps for Italy (Sc #24-33). The one reproduced in the Guernsey set

is Sc #26, the 5-cent value. It bears the likeness of King Victor Emmanuel II, as do all the other higher values printed at that time, whereas the two lowest had only a large numeral 1 or 2 instead. The 1-cent denomination (Sc #24) appears as a SOS in sheet form in the background of a stamp issued by Italy in 1977 bearing the portrait of Quintino Sella on the 150th year of his birth (#1285). Fig. 4 shows copies of both stamps. A man of many accomplishments, Quintino Sella became the first minister of finance for the newly unified Italy of 1862. In that capacity, he contracted with De La Rue to print the stamps in London and provide the equipment, technology, and training for subsequently printing them in Turin, thus establishing the precedent for government security printing in Italy.¹

Although Great Britain, Hong Kong, and Italy are still issuing stamps and have featured examples from their early postal histories by reproducing a few SOSs of De La Rue's handiwork, if not mentioning him by name, the remaining postal entity in

the Guernsey set, the Confederate States of America, had, as we know, existed for only four turbulent years. In 1862 it issued a 5-cent postage stamp printed by De La Rue bearing a portrait of President Jefferson Davis (CSA Sc #6). A year later it was also printed in Richmond from plates supplied by De La Rue (Sc #7). But more than a century and a quarter would pass before a portrait of Davis would ever appear on a stamp of the United States. In 1995 he was included in a sheet

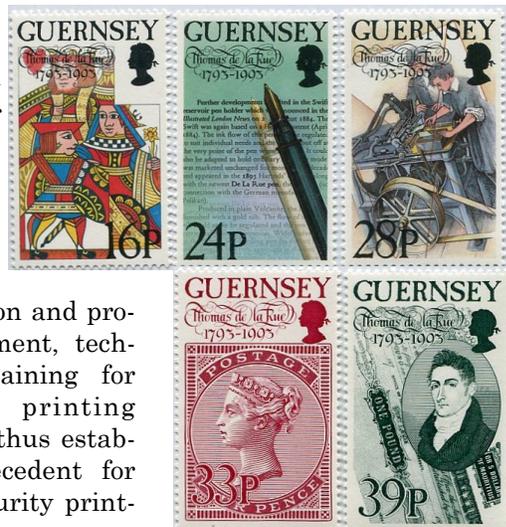


Fig. 5

of twenty stamps depicting four battle scenes and sixteen personages from the Civil War era, it appears, selected to balance the many present-day

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demands for political correctness (Davis is US Sc #2974f).

Guernsey again honored De La Rue in 1993 with a set of five stamps and booklets for the bicentennial of his birth (Sc #520-524, Fig. 5). Even though the set contains only one SOS, it is interesting because the other stamps illustrate pioneering activities that he, his son, brother, or the firm (which is still very much alive as a giant in security printing) are known for: producing the first modern playing cards, introducing the first practical fountain pen, and designing the first envelope-making and folding machine. The SOS (Sc #523) is described by Scott as GB type A1, which could

be any one of the varieties of the 4-Penny Carmine.

But for this important occasion I think De La Rue deserved a stamp of his own, like one similar to the many stamps his firm printed over the years bearing regal heads. Instead, he had to share his stamp (Sc #524) with yet another achievement appearing in the background, the first banknote his firm printed for Mauritius in 1860. De La Rue again peers from the same oval that he was pictured in four times in the 1971 set. Perhaps next time "the local boy who made good" will get his very own stamp. Ditto Quintino Sella.

Notes:

1. I want to thank Plinio Richelmi for the information he provided both personally and from the SOS Italian Group's forum which he was so kind in translating, and for responding so quickly to my question about why Quintino Sella's portrait was superimposed on the early stamp. The forum's address is <http://www.lafilatelia.it/forum/viewforum.php?f=94>

Harry Skallerup lives in Florida. He is a retired university head librarian and a long-time SOSCC member who has written previously for this journal.

A Khmer Republic Variety By Lou Guadagno

In 1974, the Khmer Republic (Cambodia) issued a series of gold foil stamps and souvenir sheets to commemorate the Centenary of the UPU, including perforated (Sc# C52) and imperforate (Michel # Block 60B) sheets with a stamp on stamp theme. On the 1200k embossed stamps is a reproduction of the US Lunar Rover pair of 8c stamps (Sc #1434a) issued in 1971, modified with gold perforations.

I obtained a flown, regis-

tered first day cover of the perforated s/s soon after it was issued, but had to wait almost 25 years to get it mint. Then late last year, I came across a dealer offering the imperforate s/s at not much more than the price I'd paid for the perforate one. I couldn't reach his minimum purchase amount with just that one item, so I also bought a duplicate of the perforated s/s (the price of which was well below what I had paid previously) with the hope that I could trade or sell

it somehow.

When the sheets arrived, I did what I usually do when I get a duplicate stamp or cover. I compared it to my original, intending to keep the best copy for myself, as some gold foil stamps show wear or tarnish after a time.

At first glance, both sheets were identical in quality, but just before I committed the second one to my dupes folder, I was surprised to see that they did not have the same perforations! My origi-

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S/S with complete vertical perforation

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A Stamp on Stamp Mosaic from the Philippines

By Lou Guadagno

I got a very pleasant surprise recently when I was going thru an online new issue listing, as after checking for those marked SOS, I scanned thru the rest just to see what other interesting stamps might have been issued, and also to see if the dealer might have missed a not too obvious SOS issue as they often do.

About three quarters of the way thru I came across a stamp and S?S described “Philippines--65th Anniversary I.C.A.O. (Angel)”, and a quick look showed just that, with the design created in a mosaic, and wondering what the mosaic was made from prompted a second, closer look. There was no obvious I.C.A.O.-stamp tie in, but I am always hoping to find another SOS, so I copied the stamp, and a few minutes later I was looking at a rather blurry enlargement, but I was now sure that the mosaic was made up of Philippine stamps, as I saw in the tiny color blobs several that I recognized as having been reproduced in previous Philippine SOS. An even closer look found a couple of stamps from Hong Kong too!

Then I went surfing on line to find out about the issue, and it took another week before any information turned up, but it was

fairly complete.

On December 7, 2009 the Philippines issued a 7p value stamp and a 28p value souvenir sheet made up of an enlargement of the same stamp design divided into a se tenant



block of four 7p stamps, to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the I.C.A.O. (International Civil Aviation Organization, an agency of the United Nations).

According to the site, the design was that of a “Greek Goddess of Flights”, but my home library and Wikipedia on line do not make reference to one, however, be it “Angel” or “Goddess”, the figure of a winged woman has been used as an allegory of flight on many stamps over the years.

Several artists were involved in producing the stamps: the designer (creator of the stamp mo-

saic?) was Godofredo F. Zapanta, Jr., the design coordinator was Crisostomo F. Albanes, the graphic artists were Peter I. Galace and Victorino Serevo, the layout artists were Robert A. Jingco and Jesus Alfredo de los Santos. Between them they created a very unique, if so far, unheralded SOS issue.

Both stamps were printed in offset lithography by the Amstar Co., which produces many Philippine stamps, with an issue of 55,000 stamps and 9,500 s/s.

I haven’t made an attempt to count the number of stamps in the design (I will leave that to younger eyes), but it certainly surpasses the 110 stamps reproduced on the 2003 North Korea sheets commemorating the Birth of Mao Tse-Tung, and so becomes the issue with the most—and smallest --SOS!

For those of us in the Club who enjoy the challenge of identifying SOS, an issue like this will provide hours of enjoyment--and frustration—why don’t you join us?

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Snowy Siberia Variety By Lou Guadagno

“One man’s meat is another man’s poison” is an old adage that you hear every now and then, and I think it could be applied to the complaint of the maps on stamps topical collector that I came across in a May 4, 1950 issue of the long-gone periodical, *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*. I hope you will find it as amusing as I did.

In his article, *Miniature Maps of the World*, William R. Horney describes Russia/USSR #1080 as follows:

“What could have been an excellent map of Soviet Russia on this postage stamp is practically obliterated by the reproduction in miniature of nine postage stamps previously issued by the Soviet regime, all of which are superimposed on the map.”



Russia /USSR #1080

We stamp on stamp collectors, on the other hand, consider this stamp a great example of our topic, and if we give it any thought at all, think of the map as a nice red border to frame the stamp reproductions.

I wonder what Mr. Horney would think of the variety of this stamp I “discovered” about 40 years ago. It was offered as one of several examples of the imperforate margins that exist on this set, but I also noticed that the red color was partially missing. I still remember the dealer asking me why I was buying two of the “same” stamp. Mr. Horney might think the map further



Russia /USSR #1080 imperforate margin

ruined, but I am happy to have this stamp in my collection as what I named the *Snowy Siberia* variety.



Snowy Siberia variety with area missing red color identified by right side black arrow.

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New Issues By Gaston Barrette

<u>Year</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>Dy</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Values</u>	<u>Reason for Issue</u>	<u>Stamp Reproduced</u>	<u>Scott #</u>
2009	10	13	Australia	10x55c	Australia Post 200 years	Australia #3086-90,3049b, 3049c, tbi(10v-3sos)	3175
2009	10	31	Belgium	"1"	Promotion of Philately	Belgium #139a	to come
2009	03	20	Brazil	R\$.65-R\$1.00	Products and Services	Stamp on envelope tbi	to come
2009	10	22	Cayman Islands	25c-\$1.00	Christmas 2009	Cayman islands #749-52	to come
2009	08	07	China-Taiwan	\$5,\$25	Modern Taiwanese Paintings	The #5 and part of \$25 on label	to come
2009	09	01	Colombia	5x\$4.000	150 Years Postage Stamps	Colombia #1,6,4,3,7	to come
2009	11	05	French Polynesia	500fr	The Young Girl of Bora Bora	French Polynesia #180	to come
2009	06	20	Korea (North)	50w	135th Ann. U.P.U	Indicia on envelope	4845
2009	10	00	Korea (North)	2x60w	North Korea Friendship with China	North Korea #3287c,3384.3716. 3563.4374b.4473c 140a,153a,54,355,259.4089,258. 2329,4760,3940-41 (2SS)	to come
2009	09	16	Luxemburg	50c,70c	75th Ann. Philatelic Society	Luxemburg #198	1281
2009	12	00	Monaco	1.35euro	2009 ASCAT Grand Prix	United States #85A	to come
2009	10	02	Montenegro	0.25euro	Stamp Day	Montenegro #72,77,88, H2	to come
2009	10	01	Netherlands	44c	Stamp Day	Netherlands #86	to come
2009	01	00	Netherlands Antil-	30c-285c	Islands	Netherlands Antilles #1136-47	to come
2009	08	06	New Caledonia	4x110fr	150th Ann. Postal Service	New Caledonia #C238 in margin	1078
2009	08	06	New Caledonia	4x150fr	150th Ann. Postal Service	Kagou issues of previous years	1075
2009	09	07	New Zealand	50c,75c,\$1.00	80th Ann. Children's Health Stamps	New Zealand #B23,B151,B5	to come
2009	09	25	St. Vincent & the Grenadines	4x\$1.00	400th Ann. Discoveries of Fulton, Hudson and Champlain	United States #72	to come
2009	10	23	Serbia	46c	Stamp Day/100th Ann. Michel Catalogue	Germany #137,Saxony#1,Czechoslovakia #65,Brunswick#5,Danish WI #3 6	to come
2009	10	09	South Africa	non-den.	Joburg 2010 Int'l Stamp Show	South Africa #1	to come
2009	00	00	Surinam	50c,70c	Stamp Day	Surinam #15,20	to come
2009	08	09	United Arab Re-	150FILS-	100 years of Postal Services	Pakistan #12,2,4,1,H&G#1, Trucial States #4, Oman #12,21 Dubai #91-6,80.83.UAE #3,13,112, 113,115,tbi (stamps + SS)	to come
2009	08	24	United Nations-	10x 1.40euro	30th Ann. Vienna Int'l Center	UN-Vienna #3 in margin	to come
2009	10	02	United Nations-	10x1.40euro	40th Ann. UNPA Geneva	UN-Vienna #8 on tabs	to come

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New Issues By Gaston Barrette



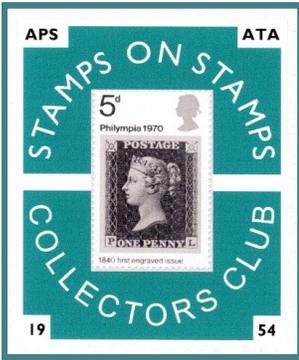
By row position from left to right

Top: Australia, Belgium—Cayman, Republic of China (Taiwan)

2nd: Colombia, Korea, Luxemburg

3rd: Netherlands, Serbia, New Zealand, New Caledonia

Last: South Africa, New Zealand—St. Vincent—The Grenadines, United Arab Emirates



SOSCC was founded in 1954. It is a non-profit philatelic organization serving a worldwide membership and is open to persons interested in stamp on stamp designs, stamp anniversaries and related topics. Dues are \$15 per year for members residing in North America and \$18 elsewhere. Its full color newsletter is laser printed on acid free paper and mailed to members three times a year in February, June and October. Members may elect to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, in which case dues are \$8 per year.

Officers serve without compensation and are reimbursed only for expenses incurred on behalf of the Club. You are cordially invited to associate with us. Please contact the Secretary/Treasurer or use our website for more information and to become a member.

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A Khmer Republic Variety

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nal sheet had partial vertical perforations extending down from the stamp thru to the bottom edge, and was a match for the sheet on my first day cover. The new sheet had complete vertical perforations that extended from the top edge thru to the bottom edge.

The Lollini Conquest of Space catalog notes that only 3000 perforated and 1000 imperforate sheets were issued, and even if this number is suspect, the sheets are not common in the market. One dealer told me that he had only sold two or three sheets over the years, and never more than one at a time. Perhaps, this is the reason that the different perf varieties were not publicized.

A possible explanation is that when the uncut plate of sheets was set up for

perforation, the machine used could only start at a set point and then work down, leaving the top sheets with only partial perforations. I have seen other issues produced this way, such as Rhodesia Sc #240a and the Montserrat Sc #414-9 mini sheets.

I am curious to learn which of the two any other members may have in their collections and would appreciate their feedback.

