

GLOSSARY OF PHILATELIC TERMS

Abnormal Term used for certain stamps produced by De La Rue for Great Britain 1862-1880 from plates which were not put into normal production

Accepted Design The artwork approved by a postal administration and passed to the printer for production.

Accessories Basic equipment to aid collecting in addition to stamp albums, stamp hinges, Watermark Detector, etc

Accountancy Mark A handstamp applied to international letters prior to 1875 showing the charge to be collected from the addressee

Additional Halfpenny Tax A charge made by the British Post Office before 1840 on letters transmitted in Scotland if conveyed at any point of their journey by vehicles having more than two wheels and for certain tolls such as the Menai Bridge.

Adhesive General term for stamps, more specifically those with gum on the back

Admiralty Official Stamps overprinted with these words were used by H.M Admiralty dockyards and other installations on official mail

Advanced Coated Paper A type of paper devised by Harrison & Sons to obviate the problem of ink absorption in the drying process

Advertisements on Stamps Stamp advertising first appeared in 1840. In Britain the advertising was carried on pictorial envelopes and wrappers sold by the Post Office, e.g. Mulreadys. Later adverts were printed on selvage, interleaving and as part of the stamp panes in stamp booklets.

Advertisements on Postmarks Advertising by Slogan Postmarks was not adopted until the late 19th Century. Commercial advertising was banned in Great Britain until 1989 since when a wide range of goods and services have been advertised.

Advertising Labels Adhesive labels used to advertise a commercial company.

Advice of Delivery An international service adopted by member countries of the UPU in 1891 permitting the sender of a registered packet, on payment of a fee, to be advised of the delivery of the packet. See also Advice of Receipt

Advice of Receipt q.v Advice of Delivery

AED Affranchie a l'étranger jusqu'a destination, postage paid to destination. (q.v PD)

Aero-philately The collection and study of "Air Mail" stamps and of matters appertaining to the carriage of mail by Air.

Aerogramme Term adopted by UPU in 1951 to denote special letter sheets printed on lightweight paper and intended to be sent by airmail. (q.v Air Letter)

Affixing Machines Privately manufactured machine for applying stamps to envelopes worked by hand or electricity.

Affranchts Abbreviation for "Affranchissements". A pre-cancel marking found on French stamps used on Official Mail or on bulk postings of business mail.

Agency An Organisation of either public or private enterprise handling and promoting sales of new issues of postage stamps to the stamp trade on behalf of the issuing Governments.

Air cards Pre stamped cards devised by Royal Mail in 1993 for airmail use.

Air Covers Envelopes bearing cachets or airmail stamps or other evidence of their being carried by aeroplane etc.

Air Hole Flaw Technical term for an uncoloured area, usually circular, which appears accidentally in a coloured portion of a stamp design.

Air Letter Forms Special letter forms impressed with a sixpenny stamp issued in GB in 1943 to facilitate the writing and handling of air mail letters.

Airgraph Special letter form used by GB during WW2 for forces mail overseas which was microfilmed and then reproduced on arrival at destination.

Airmail Any form of correspondence transmitted by air,

Airmail Labels Member countries of the UPU adopt a standardised blue label for affixing to correspondence sent by air to facilitate easy recognition, also known as etiquettes (q.v)

Airmail Letter Card A folded letter sheet for British Armed Forces in WW2

Airmail Stamps Postage stamps expressly providing for prepayment of postage on air borne mail.

Airway Letter Stamps Stamps issued by British European Airways since 1951 and also for a while by Cambrian Airways, for the carriage of letters between airports and for posting on arrival.

Airstream A service of the British Post Office introduced in 1986 for the bulk posting of airmail packets using postage paid impression and a distinctive label.

Albino Impression A colourless (uninked) impression of either a stamp (usually embossed) or of an overprint or surcharge.

Album Book designed to house stamps etc.

ALF Automatic Letter Facing machine that prepares mail for automatic cancelling.

All-Over Watermark A single device or pattern covering the whole sheet of paper.

Alpha and Beta Flaws Terms to describe flaws in lithographed stamps. An Alpha Flaw is one which builds up on the litho stone during the early processes of stamp production. A Beta flaw is one which occurs later because of wear on the stone.

Alphabet Great Britain's first line engraved issues had letters printed in the bottom corners. These, over time, came from four sets of hand punches having distinctive type faces, known as Alphabets I, II, III, IV (q.v Check Letters).

All Up Service A scheme introduced in 1937 whereby all letter mail sent from the UK to Commonwealth Countries was sent by air at no additional cost to surface rates of postage.

Ambulance Bag Plastic bag used since the 1980s by the Post Office to seal and forward damaged or broken packets in transit: similarly a paper envelope used by the Post Office before the advent of plastic.

Ambulant Postmark denoting a Travelling Post Office.

Anaglyph Printing in two colours to give a three-dimensional effect.

Anaglyptography Form of machine engraving which gives an appearance of relief to a print through use of parallel wavy lines.

Anchor Printing terminology for a rivet, nail or screw used to fix a printing plate to a wooden or metal mount.

Anchor Watermark Watermark used in certain issues of Great Britain and Colonies. An Anchor is shown in many stamp papers.

Anhyphenate Without a hyphen.

Aniline Water soluble and fugitive ink with a dye base that runs when wetted and fluoresces under a UV lamp.

Aniline Colour Printer's Ink with a coal tar base.

Annulé Cancelled.

Anti Tuberculosis Seals Charity label sold to raise funds to combat TB resembles a stamp but is not valid for postage. q.v Health Stamps

APO Abbreviation for Army Post Office.

A Payer (French) To pay, Inscribed on some Postage Due stamps.

A Percevoir (French) To collect, Inscription on some Postage Due stamps.

Approvals Stamps sent by dealers to collectors with the option of buying or returning them before a set date.

Après le Depart (French) Too late.

AR Avis de Réception. q.v Advice of Receipt

Arc Roulette Method of separating stamps by a series of minute semi circular slits varying in distance between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

Archer Perforation Stamps perforated by Henry Archer during his experiments in first applying perforation to postage stamps. (1850 - 1854)

Archival Paper Paper manufactured to provide resistance to natural aging.

Army Official Overprint on low value British stamps used by district and station paymasters' offices between 1896 and 1904. Victoria and Edwardian stamps overprinted were used for all their correspondence with the exception of letters to the War Office which were free. (q.v Army Service and AS)

Army Post Office The organisation responsible for handling soldiers mail (see also FPO (Forces Post Office)).

Army Telegraphs Stamps inscribed either Army Telegraphs or Military Telegraphs were issued between 1884 and 1901 for use by British Military Forces on manoeuvres.

Aromatic Stamps Stamps that give off an aroma e.g. Switzerland 2001 Chocolate issue which when scratched had an aroma of chocolate.

Arrival Postmark Impression placed on mail by receiving office to show name of office and arrival date. Usually applied on back of correspondence.

Arrow Block Multiple of stamps, usually a block of four, with an attached sheet margin bearing a printed arrow as a guide to dividing the sheet for easier balancing of stock.

Art Paper A superfine paper with a surface of china clay giving it a highly enamelled finish for the printing of fine-screen half-tone blocks,

Artwork Artist's painting or drawing serving as the basis for stamp design.

AS Army Service perfin (q.v) on postage stamp for use by Sudan Military.

As Is Stamps etc sold to collectors at their own risk not guaranteed by the vendor.

Astrophilately Space philately as a theme or topic. A study and collection of stamps, covers and documents related to space exploration.

Athens Prints The first issues of Greece were printed by Meyer in Paris but later printings from November 1861 were made in Athens.

ATF (French) Angleterre Transit Francais.

ATM q.v Automatic Teller Machine.

Auctions A widely used method of buying and selling stamps.

Authentication Expert opinion that a stamp or other philatelic item is genuine.

Autogiro Mail 1930's experimental aircraft that carried mail over short but congested routes.

Automatic Franking Machine - q.v Meter Mark.

Automatic Letter Facing Machine Machine invented by GPO in 1957 for use in letter sorting offices. The machine arranges letters so that the stamps on them are all in the same position.

Automatic Machine Perforation Type of perforation applied to vertical spaces between stamps of New Zealand (1905-6) and USA (1906-12).

Automatic Sorting Machine

Automatic Stamp Vending Machine Machines installed at certain Post Offices and elsewhere for the supply of adhesive stamps by paying the money into a slot.

Automatic Stamps Any impression applied directly to a postal packet or to a gummed label for fixing to a postal packet dispensed by a coin operated machine.

Automatic Teller Machine Machine used by banks for dispensing cash, but has been adapted in USA and Australia to dispense special small sheets of self adhesive stamps.

Autres Objects (French) Other Articles. A category of International Mail that is made up of various classes of printed matter, small packets, matter for the blind.

AV2 A UPU Form stating weight of registered and non registered airmail (q.v OAT).

Average A stamp with poor margins or perforations cutting into design, also maybe a heavy postmark.

Avis de Reception Permits the sender, upon payment of a fee, to be notified of confirmation of delivery.

Azemar Early type of postmarking machine devised by J.G Azemar in 1868 and used experimentally in London between February 1869 and the end of 1872.

Back of the Book Refers to a variety of items usually listed in the back of a specialised stamp catalogue e.g. postage dues, revenues, postal savings stamps etc..

Background Lines, shading, or solid colour used as a background for an artistic feature such as a head

Backing Part of a printing plate made by pouring molten type metal into the non printing side of an electro-deposited shell.

Backprint Any printing on the reverse of a stamp (see also Underprint).

Backstamp Postmark applied to the back of an envelope and other postal packets, often at places en route or at point of arrival.

Bâle Dove Swiss Cantonal stamp issue of 1845.

Balloon Post Mail carried by either a manned balloon or a free (unmanned) balloon.

Ballon Monté Piloted balloon. Term used for letters despatched by balloon during the Siege of Paris (1870-1871).

Bande (French) Newspaper Wrapper.

Bank Mixture Stamps usually on paper gathered from incoming mail of banks.

Banknote Paper Paper originally used for the production of banknotes, but subsequently used for the printing of stamps e.g. Latvia 1920.

Bantams Miniature war economy stamps of South Africa were so named because of their size.

Bar Cancel Cancellation consisting of bars in rectangular, oval or circular patterns.

Barcode Stamps & Labels Barcodes are patterns of straight lines of varying thickness which are able to be read by electronic equipment.

Bar Cut Groove deliberately cut into the obliterating bars of some stamps to identify the stamper.

Barred Cancel Obliteration used either to cancel a stamp or to block out a portion of the design.

Basted Mills Paper on which some New Zealand Stamps were printed.

Bâtonné Thin "bank" letter paper, designed for lightweight foreign correspondence and watermarked with parallel lines to facilitate neatness of writing.

Beaufort House Essays Designs submitted by Charles Whiting of Beaufort House in the British Treasury competition of 1839.

Bed Steel surface in a printing press on which a printing plate is laid.

Benzine Colourless liquid made from petroleum used for detecting watermarks in stamps.

Bi-coloured A term applied to a stamp printed in two colours.

Bicycle Posts Postal services operated by means of bicycles.

Bilingual Pair Two unseparated stamps on which the inscriptions are in different languages.

Bilingual Stamp A single stamp with inscriptions in two languages.

Bipartite Stamp Stamp made in two parts for easy separation so that one part can be put on the mailed packet with the other acting as a receipt.

Bisect Name given to single postage stamps divided in half officially or privately and used postally.

Bit A design or device reproduced in bent wire for attachment to the dandy-roll of paper-making machine to produce a watermark.

Bite A white spot in an impression due to a small piece of paper adhering during printing.

Bishop Mark Small circular handstruck mark showing month and day, but not year. It is the earliest dated postmark known to have been used by any postal administration. Invented by Henry Bishop and introduced in 1661.

BIT Bureau International du Travail (International Labour Office).

Bizonals Nickname given to stamps issued from 1945 to 1949 in the Anglo American zones of Germany.

Blackout Cancel Machine postmarks consisting of a black line, circle or crosses used as a wartime security measure.

Black Plates Printing plates used for making the Penny Black Stamp of Great Britain in 1840. (q.v Red Plates).

Black Prints Proofs of forthcoming postage stamps which were sent by the Austrian Post Office to the press for publicity also printing of GB Line engraved 1d stamps in black ink after printing in red had begun. Also used to describe souvenir sheets of stamp issues with no postal validity.

Blanc French key-type design designed by Joseph Blanc used 1900-1929.

Blanket Endless belt of felt which conveys newly formed paper through the pressing rollers.

Bleaching Term used for a colour usually destroyed by oxidation.

Bleed Off Printing term denoting printing which runs off the edge of a page after trimming.

Bleuté Paper tinged with blue.

Blind Perforation A perforation where the holes have not been punched out due to blunt or missing perforation pins.

Blitz Perforation Applied to perforation variations of the 1940 printings of New Zealand and other British Colonies. So named because they were produced by Waterlow when De La Rue's works were blitzed.

Block Four or more unsevered stamps in the format of 2 x 2 forming a rectangle. (q.v Corner Block).

Block Letter Plain squared printers' type without ornament or serifs.

Blocked Value Name given to one denomination in a set of stamps for which the sale has been restricted.

Blue Rag Paper Paper containing a quantity of rag as well as wood pulp but which is in fact more grey than blue.

Blued Paper paper with a blue discolouration caused by prussiate of potash in the printing ink reacting with the paper. (q.v Bleuté).

BM q.v MB.

Board of Education Overprint on British stamps issued between 1902 and 1904 to school inspectors for use on official correspondence.

Boadwalk Margin A wide margin.

Bogus Stamps Unauthorised stamps.

Boite Mobile (BM) French words meaning Mobile Box.

Bold Type Lettering thicker and darker in colour than usual, often used in overprints

Bond Paper A thin crisp paper with a hard surface.

Booklet Small panes of stamps bound together in covers often interleaved with sheets of commercial advertising.

Booklet Pane pane of stamps from a booklet.

Booklet Stamps Stamps intended for release in booklets and differing in some aspect from normal issued stamps.

Bookmark Postcard A narrow postcard measuring 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches that can also be used as a bookmark.

Bordpost (German) Ship Mail

Bordeaux Print A stamp lithographed at Bordeaux in 1870/1 instead of being produced in Paris during the Franco Prussian War.

Boule de Moulins Zinc coated steel sphere containing bundles of letters wrapped in waterproof material which was floated down the River Seine into Paris during the Siege 1870-1871.

Boxlink An accelerated service operated by the New Zealand Post Office mainly for business users.

Boy Scout Posts Posts organised by boy scouts in the absence of national post services and at Christmas when Royal Mail has authorised the service for the specific purpose of local delivery of Christmas Cards.

Braille A system of printing by means of raised dots enabling the blind to read by touch.

Briefmarke German for a stamp.

Britannia Types Early British Colonial design engraved by Perkins Bacon e.g. for British West Indies.

British Closed Mail Prepaid mail for foreign countries sent through the British postal system 1849.

British Gum Commercial name for dextrin, leicome or starch gum used on early British stamps.

British Postal Agency

Broken Letters Malformed or broken letters in the inscriptions on stamps caused by damage to the printing plate.

Brunswick Star Postmark used in Edinburgh between 1863 and 1873, so called because it was similar to the star of the Ducal Order of Brunswick.

BT Surmounted by a Crown. Punch perforated on stamps of GB signifies Board of Trade.

Bulk Handling Centre

Bulk Posting Where prepayment has been made to the Post Office for letters and packets posted in bulk.

Bulk Rate Stamps Special low denomination adhesive stamps for use on bulk posted mail.

Bull's Eyes Nickname given to the first issues of Brazil.

Bureau Prints Stamps produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Washington.

Burélage A fine network composed of either wavy lines or dots.

Burélé Having burélage or network.

Burin The cutting tool of tempered steel, one end of which is a sharp point used in engraving on metal as in line engraving.

Burr The uneven raised edge of surplus metal resulting from the passage of the engraver's burin.

Bus Parcel Stamps Private stamps issued by bus companies to prepay freight charges on packets and parcels conveyed on bus routes.

Business Reply Service A service provided by the Post Office to enable people to send mail to business firms free of charge. The business takes out a licence and all charges are debited to the licence holder.

By Posts These were the "feeder services" to the six Post Roads in Great Britain in the later part of the 17th & 18th centuries.

CA Crown Agents - A watermark on early British Colonial stamps

Cachet A mark applied to a cover in addition to the postmark.

Calendering The technique by which paper is smoothed using chilled steel rollers at the end of the manufacturing process.

Cameo Term to describe certain stamps bearing embossed effigies which have the appearance of a cameo.

Campaign Cover Envelope etc. posted by military or naval personnel on active service in wartime.

Cancellation Defacement applied to all types of stamps to ensure that they are not used again.

Cancelled by Favour Stamps cancelled in some special manner to oblige the purchaser.

Cancelled to Order Term describing a stamp bearing a postmark applied "by favour". A postal official would cancel the stamps in sheets or on covers and return them directly to the dealer or collector.

Cantonal Stamps Postage stamps issued by the Cantons in Switzerland prior to the issue of stamps by the Swiss Confederation.

Cape Triangular Nickname for the three cornered stamps issued by the Cape of Good Hope.

Captain's Gratuity An additional fee over and above the postage rate charged to recompense the Ship's Master of a private vessel for carrying mail.

Carbon Tetrachloride Colourless liquid which will make paper transparent without harming the gum of mint stamps and removes oil or grease from other materials.

Carbon Tissue Paper-backed sheet of gelatine used in photogravure printing.

Cardboard Fine quality card of varying thickness used for proofing impressions of stamp dies and plates.

Cardiff Penny Nickname for imperforate examples of GB 1d red (Plate 116) of 1864 issued in Cardiff in January 1879.

Caritas Charity.

Carnet du Timbre (French) Stamp Booklet.

Carriers' Stamps Issues made by local carrier services, most of which were in the United States.

Carto Philately The collection and study of stamps incorporating maps in their designs.

Carton Paper A thick semi card paper.

Cartouche Small oval or circle containing a portrait or heraldic device.

Cartridge Paper A strong rough paper occasionally used for stamps (Trinidad 1d blue of 1853).

Cash on Delivery Labels Labels issued by Post Offices for packets on which trade charges are to be recovered from the addressee.

Cat. Catalogue.

Catalogue Specialised priced handbooks covering selected issues of one country or of the world which may be in 4 or 5 volumes e.g. Stamps of the World by Stanley Gibbons.

Catalogue Value The sale price quoted for a stamp in a recognised catalogue.

Catapult Mail Mail accelerated by a "Ship to Shore" service involving the use of light aircraft catapulted from the decks of ships, when within range of shore.

CC Crown Colonies.

CDS Circular Date Stamp.

Censor Marks Manuscript endorsements hand struck marks or printed labels showing that mail has been opened and examined by a civil or military censor.

Census Marking A diamond shaped mark applied by machine to all mail posted in Britain during the annual mail census.

Centre Term for the central feature of a stamp design. q.v Vignette

Centred Term applied to stamps to show the position of the perforations in relation to the printed design.

Certificate of Expertisation A written opinion from an Expert Committee.

Certificate of Posting Form supplied with the date of posting and retained by the sender as proof that an item has been posted.

Certified Mail Mail for which a receipt has been given to the sender and a signature required from the addressee on delivery.

CFA (French) French African Community Franc. Unit of currency in French West Africa and Reunion.

Chad Round pieces of paper left after perforation of stamps.

Chain Breakers Popular name for the 1919 issues of Yugoslavia.

Chain Lines Prominent vertical lines in the watermark found on laid paper at right angles to the fine lines.

Chalk Surface Coating applied to stamp paper either to improve the print's appearance or for security reasons.

Chalky Paper The whiter paper introduced to British stamps e.g. KEVII 1½d in August 1905 to improve their appearance.

Chalon Heads Nickname for early British Colonial stamps showing a full face portrait of Queen Victoria taken from A.E Chalon's painting of her in coronation robes.

Change of Address Stamp The Netherlands issued a 70c stamp intended to be used by people who were moving house.

Changeling Term referring to a change of colour after printing.

Charge Marks & Labels Handstruck marks and adhesive labels applied to unpaid or underpaid mail to explain the reason for the deficiency and the amount to be paid.

Charity Labels Labels of non postal nature sold by various bodies to raise funds and affixed by their purchasers to letters or cards.

Charity Stamp Labels which combine indication of postal payment with a premium in aid of some charity.
Charity Surcharge Addition to the postage value of stamp for a charity donation.

Check Letters Letters in the lower corners of British Stamps (1840) and on later issues repeated but in reverse order in the upper corners (q.v Alphabet).

Cheque Stamps Embossed fiscal stamps applied to cheques from 1855 to 1971 to denote stamp duty payable on them; also the nickname for postage stamps of Nyasaland issued in 1898.

Cherifien Posts Local service of Morocco organised by the Cherifien Administration in 1911 linking most of the main towns.

Cherry Blossoms Name for Japanese Stamps of 1872-1874.

Chiffre Tax (French) Postage Due.

China Paper A waterleaf paper imported from China.

Chinese Treaty Ports Seaports on the coast of China which were opened to British trade as a result of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842.

Chops Seals or handstamps bearing ideographs or Japanese characters.

Christmas Charity Post Stamps Stamps issued by Scout, Youth and Church groups in Britain since 1981, since when it is permitted for charities to deliver Christmas & New Year Cards between 25 November and 1 January.

Christmas Mail Scheme operated by the British Post Office whereby mail could be posted in advance for delivery on Christmas Day. In use from 1902 to 1904.

Christmas Seals Invented by Einar Holboell and issued under the auspices of post offices in Scandinavia and the USA.

Chromolithography Form of lithography using two or more colours simultaneously.

Cigarette Paper Very thin paper meant for rolling cigarettes but used by Latvia for a stamp issue in 1919.

Cigarette Tax Stamps Stamps indicating a Government tax on cigarettes.

Cinderella Stamps Labels, vignettes etc other than postage stamps.

Circular Datestamp Form of postmark produced by a single or combined circle incorporating the date and place of posting.

Circular Delivery Companies Founded in Great Britain in the 1860s these private companies undertook local delivery of circulars and printed matter.

Circular Delivery Stamps Stamps issued by private companies in Great Britain in 1865-67 for the delivery of circulars, samples and other printed matter at rates which were lower than the Post office.

Classic Term used to describe the early postage stamps produced between 1840 and 1875.

Cleaned Plate A cleaned printing surface, Alkaline solutions are used to clean plates. A clean surface produces stamps with sharper impressions.

Cleaned Stamp A stamp from which a postal or fiscal marking or a blemish has been removed.

Cliché Term for the individual stamp subject on a letterpress printing plate.

Clipped Transfer In lithography the transfers are of paper and may require trimming before laying on the stone. If trimmed too close on one or more sides a clipped transfer will result.

CMF Central Mediterranean Force WW2

Coated Paper Any paper with a mineral composition deposited on its surface after manufacture.

COD Cash on Delivery

Code Sort Translator

Coffee House Mail For over 150 years Coffee Houses acted as an important mail exchange centres.

Cogwheel Cancel Circular numbered obliteration used by Bavaria 1850-69 so called on account of the ratchet projections surrounding the numerals.

Coil Join Pair of coil stamps linked by a narrow strip of marginal paper, the coil being made up of rows from sheets.

Coil Leader Strip of paper at the beginning of a coil of stamps that facilitates the loading of a stamp vending machine.

Coil Stamp One of a roll of stamps used in stamp vending machines.

Coil Trailer A piece of paper adhering to the edge of the last stamp on a roll.

Coin Daté (French) Date of printing found on corner blocks of stamps from complete sheets.

Colis Postaux (French) Parcel Post.

Collateral Material Related matter, maps, books or other illustrations, newspapers etc. exhibited with a stamp collection.

College Stamps Name for issues made by Oxford and Cambridge colleges for their messenger services in the 1870s and 1880s.

Collotype A method of printing using gelatine images of photographs. An example is the souvenir sheet commemorating the London 1950 International Stamp Exhibition.

Colour Changeling A stamp whose colour has been altered, either accidentally or deliberately.

Colour Guide Usual form is a folding card on which the main philatelic colours are shown.

Colour Postmark Postmark applied in a colour other than black.

Colour Proof Proofs made in the adopted colour or colours.

Colour Separation Method of segregating different coloured parts of a stamp design for printing.

Colour Trial Proofs taken of a stamp in a wide range of colours.

Coloured Paper Paper which is coloured right through during the manufacturing process.

Coloured Roulette Lines of slits between rouletted stamps in colour from printing on the notched rules between the clichés.

Column The vertical line of stamps in a sheet as distinguished from a horizontal row.

Comb Perforation Perforation in which the perforating pins are arranged in a comb pattern, a long horizontal line with short vertical lines.

Combination Cover Item of mail bearing adhesive postage stamps of more than one stamp issuing authority.

Combined Stamp Circular datestamp combining an obliterating element with the name and date of posting.

Commemorative Cancel Postmark either handstruck or applied by machine intended to commemorate an event or anniversary.

Commemorative Stamp Issues which both prepay postage and commemorate a specific event.

Compartment Lines Irregular lines outside the printed area of stamps occurring in letterpress plates where extraneous metal (flashing) has not been removed in the manufacturing and therefore picks up ink during printing.

Composite Die Block of metal bearing a part of a stamp design, with a space for insertion of a separate piece of metal carrying the remainder.

Composite Sheet A sheet of stamps made up of different values, designs or a normal sheet overprinted or surcharged in a similar way enabling a complete set of stamps to be obtained from a single sheet.

Compound Envelopes Stationery bearing more than one kind of stamp embossed thereon.

Compound Perforation Perforation involving two or more different gauges along the same side of the same stamp.

Compound Plates Printing plates each bearing only part of the design which are cut in such a way that they can be inked separately.

Compulsory Postage Stamps Stamps issued by some countries for compulsory use on mail posted on certain days.

Compulsory Registration Practice used by many postal authorities when coins, jewellery or other valuables are sent through the post.

Computer Generated Stamps Labels whose design and text are entirely produced by dot matrix or ink jet printer from a word processor.

Concentration Camp Mail Mail from the concentration camps established by the Nazi regime in Germany and occupied Europe distinguished by special postmarks, stationery and stamps.

Concessionary Parcel Stamps Stamps issued by Italy since 1953 and used by carriers and freight companies operating local parcel delivery services at rates lower than the Government service.

Condominium A country jointly ruled by two powers (e.g. New Hebrides).

Confetti Variety Stamp with a circular uncoloured patch in the design. (Usually only on a random single stamp).

Constant Variety A variety which appears in the same position on every sheet.

Consular Fee Stamps Fiscal issues to pay fees levied for various consular services e.g. passport renewals.

Consular Mail Mail sent from Consulates acting as postal agencies often using a distinctive cancellation.

Consular Post Offices Post Offices maintained in foreign embassies and consulates by various European powers.

Continuous Impression Machine

Continuous Overprint An overall overprint applied without regard to positioning on the individual stamps in a sheet.

Contract Mailing A procedure where mail posted in a country is air freighted to another country for sorting and onward despatch.

Control Letters Letter inscribed in the sheet margins of some British stamps as an accountancy measure.

Control Marks Security endorsement by overprint etc to curb theft.

Control Numbers Numerals engraved in the margins of plates used for the production of stamps in certain countries.

Control Overprints Overprints applied to stamps as a precaution in cases of fraud or theft.

Convention States Indian States formerly in convention with the Indian Empire.

Copper Plate Engraving Alternative name for the intaglio process, so called because copper plates were mainly used.

Cork Cancel Corks with various fancy designs cut into their surface used to obliterate postage stamps.

Corner Block Four or more stamps from the corner of a sheet with selvedge attached.

Cotton Reels The first (1850) circular typeset issues of British Guiana.

Counterfeit A forgery intended to defraud the Post Office.

Counterfoil Stamps with counterfoils as distinct from coupons.

Country Issues Term used by Royal Mail to describe the distinctive definitives issued in different parts of the UK (q.v Regional Stamps).

Coupon An attachment to a stamp which conveys additional information.

Courier Services Special services operated by various governments for the transmission of official correspondence and armed forces' mail or mail of commercial enterprises.

Cover Envelope or wrapper for letters and packets.

Cowan Paper A thin hard wove paper supplied by Cowan & Sons Ltd for postage stamps of New Zealand.

Cowries Nickname for the first stamps of Uganda (1895).

Cracked Plate Printing plate showing cracks caused by pressure in manufacture, during operation or general deterioration after long usage.

Crash Covers Covers salvaged from an aircraft or train crash. (q.v Wreck Covers).

Creased Stamps Stamps with a crease which depreciates their value.

Creased Transfer Lithographed stamp with an incomplete or distorted design caused by a defect in the transfer paper when the design was applied to the stone.

Cross Hatching Crossed lines incised in intaglio to create shaded areas.

Cross Post When the postal service was organised in Great Britain all routes went via London, but to avoid delay direct cross country routes were adopted and were known as Cross Posts.

Crown Agents Agents who act for Governments of many territories in selling stamps to dealers in many parts of the world.

Crown Watermark Watermark in the form of a crown.

Crowned Circle A hand-stamp indicating that postage has been prepaid and the country or postal area of origin.

CTO Cancelled to Order.

Culler Facer Cancellor Automatic machine used in British Sorting Offices for segregating different classes of mail facing them the right way up prior to automatic cancellation of the postage stamps on them.

Currency Stamps Postage stamps used as units of currency during shortages of coinage, sometimes deliberately printed on card for this purpose.

Current Issues Stamps at present in use.

Current Numbers Numbers inserted in the plate margins by some British and early colonial stamps to indicated the order in which the plates were made.

Customer Barcode

Customised Smilers Sheets (q.v Smilers Sheets)

Customs Stamps Fiscal issues made to denote payment of customs duty.

Cut Cancellation A cancelling device which cuts through stamps and postal stationery to prevent re-use.

Cut Edge Variety Denotes a stamp printed from a cliché from which a portion has been accidentally cut away in trimming.

Cut Out A non-adhesive stamp which has been cut from items of Postal Stationery for postal use.

Cut Square Stamp with non rectangular design whose attached imperforate margins form a rectangle, though not necessarily a square.

Cut to Register The cutting of watermarked paper in order that the design of the watermark falls into the correct position in each sheet of stamps.

Cut to Shape Embossed stamp or impression from postal stationery trimmed close to the outline of the impression.

Cyclostyle Apparatus for printing copies of a design which has been occasionally been used for stamp production. A stencil is cut over which an ink roller is passed leaving an impression on the printing paper below.

Cylinder Flaw Repetitive blemish in a stamps design caused by a defect in the printing cylinder from which the stamp was printed.

Cylinder Number Printer's mark in the margin of a sheet of stamps to identify the printing cylinder from which it came.

Cyrillic Alphabet Official alphabet of Russia which has been used with modifications on all Russian issues and has appeared also on stamps of various Slav countries.

Damaged Mail Mail damaged in transit including crash and wreck covers.

Dandy Roll Hollow wire surfaced cylinder of a paper making machine, which bears pressure on the partly formed paper to determine its texture and variations in thickness for watermarks (q.v).

Datapost Name used by British Post office for an express service guaranteeing next day delivery anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Date Cuts Breaks in the "jubilee lines", namely the printer's frame around a pane of stamps.

Dated Corner See Coin Daté.

Dated Stamps Stamps which incorporate the year date of production in their design.

Day of the Stamp Day set aside by many issuing authorities for postal and philatelic publicity.

Dead Country Term for a country that has ceased to issue stamps.

Dead Letter Letter which cannot be delivered to the addressee because it bears an incorrect or inadequate address.

Dead Letter Office Where dead letters (q.v) are held by the Post Office.

Deckle Edge The natural rough edge of paper as it leaves the a paper making machine.

Découpage French term denoting a means of adjusting the pressure of the printing plate by "cut outs" from parts of the printed design taking the form of a composite layer of sheets of cut outs to obtain lighter or deeper impression from the plate as required.

Deep Edge Excessive colour along the edge of a stamp design printed in relief, caused by over inking.

Deep Etching Additional etching in photoengraving to emphasise lines.

Defaced Plates A stamp printing plate, whose surface has been deliberately scored to ensure that it is not used again.

Deferential Cancellation Postmark designed that when stamp was cancelled the effigy of the ruler was not defaced e.g. Sicily 1859

Definitive Stamp Postage stamps intended for everyday use over a substantial period of time, distinguished from commemorative stamps (q.v).

De La Rue One of the world's leading firms of security printers.

Delacryl Name invented by De La Rue to signify a printing process made specifically for stamp production.

Delayed Mail Mail held up in transmission through the post and thus indicated by means of a label q.v
Interrupted Mail.

Deliberate Error Error made by Postal Authority to defeat philatelic speculation.

Delivery Point Code The delivery part of the postcode not visible to the public

Demonetised Unused postage stamps are termed "demonetised" when the issuing authority refuses to accept them as valid for-pre paying postage and will not exchange them for money.

Denomination A stamp's monetary value usually expressed in numbers or words.

Departmental Stamps Stamps provided for use of government departments on official mail.

Design Type Term describing stamps whose designs differ from one another only in detail.

Desulphurisation Process by which sulphur is removed from stamp colours which have been distorted through sulphureting (q.v).

Deutsche Post (German) German Post Office.

Diadem The circlet of gold and jewels forming Queen Victoria's headdress on many of the earlier stamps of her reign and that of Queen Elizabeth II

Diamond Roulette Another name for the French Percé en Losanges (q.v)

Dickinson Paper Type of paper containing a continuous coloured thread or threads of cotton manufactured by John Dickinson & Co..

Die The piece of metal on which the design of a stamp is first engraved is called the master die (q.v). After hardening it is used directly to reproduce identical impressions on the plate from which the stamp will be printed or from which subsidiary Dies or Rollers are derived.

Die Cutting A process for cutting paper by means of variously shaped dies under pressure.

Die Flaw Any blemish or unusual mark on a die from which printing surfaces have been produced shows on every stamp reproduced from that die.

Die Proof Upon completion of a die, trial printings are taken. They are the final checks before the plate is made.

Dienst (German) Official.

Dienstpost (German) Official post

Digital Printing A process pioneered in Australia where arrangements were made for 2000 Olympic Stamps to be printed in six different locations throughout the country.

Diligencia (Spanish) A type of mail or stage coach.

Diplomatic Mail Mail sent by or on behalf of a Diplomat Attaché in the Diplomatic Bag for security reasons.

Directional Mark A mark applied by the Post Office to undelivered mail to indicate its ultimate destination.

Discount Postage Stamps printed to denote sale at a discount.

Disinfected Mail Letters suspected of carrying infection from disease were subject to a cleansing treatment either on board ship or at a lazaret (quarantine station).

Dividing Marks Circular floral ornaments on Perkins, Bacon plates in 1851.

Dockwra Mark Triangular handstruck mark denoting the prepayment of postage, devised by William Dockwra for use in his London Penny Post of 1680/82.

Doctor Blade Long thin flexible strip of steel with a finely ground edge used in photogravure and other intaglio printing processes. The doctor blade removes excess ink from the non printing surface.

Doctor Blade Flaw Caused by Doctor Blade picking up a foreign body which scratches a fine line on the cylinder. Until worked out this can cause a semi constant flaw.

Document Philatelique Official (French) Official philatelic document issued by the French post office which includes a copy of the issued stamp cancelled on the day of issue, a monocolour engraving of the stamp, descriptive text and a large topical engraving with an embossed control seal.

Documentary Stamps Fiscal or revenue stamps issued for collecting payment of taxes due on various documents.

Dog Team Mail Mail carried in the Yukon and Alaska by Dog Teams during the Winter.

Domestic Mail Mail posted and delivered within the same country

Domestic Stamp A postage stamp whose validity is confined to domestic mail q.v.

Dominical Labels Labels attached to Belgian stamps from 1893 - 1914 bearing an instruction "Do not deliver on Sunday"

Doplata (Russian) To Pay

Douane (French) Customs

Double Geneva The 1843 Cantonal issue of Geneva (Switzerland) so called because it consisted of a 10c stamp printed in a double design, each half useable as a 5c stamp within the city.

Double Impression A stamp on which the design or part of the design has been printed twice. Could also apply to an overprint (q.v) or a surcharge (q.v)

Double Letter Duplication of the corner or check letters on early GB line engraved stamps.

Double Paper Term used to describe paper which is made up of two different layers for example New Zealand Chalon Head (1858-62). (q.v Coil Join, Joined Paper)

Double Perforation A stamp that has passed through the perforation machine twice.

Double Plate Printed Term to describe the method by which a stamp with a design comprising two parts each printed from a separate plate was produced.

Double Separation Sheet or part of a sheet which has been perforated twice.

Double Strike An extra fortuitous impression of the die on the mould used in relief printing for repetition of the design in the building of the printing base.

Double Transfer An extra and fortuitous transfer of the design to the stone in the Lithographic process. (q.v Re-Entry)

Downey Head British halfpenny and penny stamps of 1911/13 reproducing a three-quarter profile photograph by W and D Downey of King George V.

Downstream Access Mail from other carriers delivered by Royal Mail

DO-X International registration mark of the German Dornier multi-engined aircraft being the first to fly the Atlantic from West to East in 1932.

DP Discount Posting

Drop Letter A postal packet delivered to an address in the same postal delivery area as the office where it was posted.

Dropped Letter Term for a type character plucked from its setting by the inking roller because the type was not held firmly in place on the formé.

Dry Print A stamp having a weak appearance due to paper being too dry for the intaglio process.

Dual Currency Stamps with values expressed in two currencies.

Dues Philatelic term for postage due labels (q.v To Pay Labels).

Dumb Cancels Absence of identifying inscription found in various forms on cancellations and in stamp design.

(q.v Mute Cancel)

Duplex Cancellation Double or dual postmarks so called because they comprise a date stamp showing the name of the post office as well as a numeral.

Duplicates Copies identical to those already in one's collection.

Duty Term given to the function of a stamp as defined by the inscription.

Duty Plate The printing plate used to print the value or name and value on stamps.(q.v Frame, Vignette, Head Plate, Key Plate)

Dyed Paper Paper coloured throughout because a dye was added to the pulp during manufacture.

Easter Seal Charity labels issued at Easter, mainly in South Africa.

Economy A cheap postal service for bulk postings and printed matter.

Economy Gum Type of gum applied in patterns or blobs to the backs of some stamps issued after the Second World War.

Economy Label Used during war period to be applied to covers that were to be re-used.

Electric Eye Perforator Perforating machine which includes a controlling device to ensure that the perforation holes are positioned accurately.

Electro-Mechanical Engraving Process for producing photogravure cylinders by laser scanning an original photograph to create a digital image recorded on a computer disc which is then used to drive an electronic system for engraving cylinders.

Electronic Stamps A system whereby postage could be downloaded from an internet web site and put on envelopes and postcards using a computer printer.

Electrotyping Method of copying a design by the electro deposition of copper in a mould.

ELSIE Electronic Letter Sorting Indicator Equipment (SPLSM)

E Mail A system of electronic communication whereby messages produced by computer are transmitted by means of a modem and a server.

Emblems Name given to watermarked heraldic devices appearing in corners of early stamps of GB.

Embossed Stamp Usually a postage stamp created on paper by method of embossing (q.v)

Embossing Stamping in coloured or colourless relief, the paper itself being distorted by pressure between matched dies.

En Épargne (French) term meaning "in relief" used to describe the type of printing press used in the letterpress system.

Enamelled Paper Highly glazed paper coated with a mixture of zinc white and glue.

Enamel "Ink" A paint used for printing stamps e.g. Tibet 1912-33

Encased Postage Stamps Stamps encased in small cases with a transparent front and back used as small change when a shortage of coinage occurred.

Endorsement Printing on the back of a stamp.

Engine Turning Mechanical engraving of symmetrical patterns on metal.

Engraver's Proof Trial impressions taken during the course of making the die.

Engraving A process where the design of the stamp is cut into a metal die or plate.

Entire An envelope, postcard or wrapper, with stamps affixed or printed on it to prepay postage and in a complete condition.

Entire Letter A complete folded letter sheet with the communication on the inside and address on the outside, together with relevant postal markings and adhesive stamps.

Entry Term for a subject on a printing plate or cylinder produced by the Perkins Die and Mill process.

Envelope An envelope is a piece of paper, to each edge of which is attached a flap with the intention that these four flaps should be folded over so as to form a container for a message. Usually three of these flaps are fixed in position with gum, making a pocket, the fourth is left open to be closed after a message has been inserted.

Envelope Stamp A stamp embossed on an envelope.

Epaulettes Term for the first issue of Belgium (1849)

Épreuve De Luxe Luxury Proof of French Stamps.

Erinnophily Study and collection of commemorative labels.

Error A stamp which inadvertently has something wrong or some technical feature but has been issued by a postal authority.

Esparto Paper Paper made by Wiggins Teape from esparto grass and wood pulp.

Essay A design proposed which may not be adopted, or an initial "proof" of a design, printed as intended for the final stamp.

Etching Special term applied to the process by which the surface of a metal plate is removed by an acid for the purpose of printing.

Etiquette Term for adhesive labels such as airmail, express and registration which are affixed to letters.

Europa Stamps Stamps issued by many countries of Europe since 1956 with the word Europa inscribed on them

Examiners' Marks These are applied to postal packets to denote examination by censors in time of war or by customs authorities.

Exchange Club A group formed to exchange stamps.

Exelgram Holographic printing on thin plastic, pioneered in Australia.

Exempt Ship Letter Handstamp applied to letters written by the consignee of goods carried by ship exempting him from the normal ship letter charge.

Exhibition Labels Name for labels issued to publicise exhibitions. (q.v. Poster Stamps)

Expedited Mail Service An international service under the auspices of the UPU for the acceleration of mail.

Experimental Postmark A postmark produced during the trials of new types of handstamps or cancelling machine. e.g. Skeleton Postmark

Expert Committee Groups of specialist philatelists whose function is to express an opinion on the authenticity of stamps or other philatelic item.

Expertisation Name given to the examination of a stamp or other philatelic item by a committee of experts with a view to establishing authenticity.

Explanatory Labels & Marks Devices used by postal authorities to give reasons for surcharging unpaid or underpaid mail or to give reasons for non delivery.

Exploded A stamp booklet taken apart and displayed page by page.

Express Labels Labels usually printed in bright colours to denote express and special delivery mail.

Express Letter Stamps Postage stamps denoting the fee payable in respect of accelerated mail subject to special handling.

Extension Hole Perforation hole appearing in a sheet margin as the first or last of a row of perforation holes.

External Distortion Flaw caused by the application of force to a subject on a printing plate.

Extra Extension Hole An additional perforation hole alongside an Extension Hole (q.v) to help identify the position on a rotary perforator (q.v) where repair may be necessary.

Face Term used with reference either to a stamp's design or to the print used.

Face Value The denomination inscribed on a stamp: its official selling price.

Facer Cancellor Table Equipment designed for the automatic facing and cancelling of mail.

Facing Indicator Mark preprinted mail: 1 or 2 with facing bars

Facsimile Copy or imitation of the design and colour of a stamp.

Faded Stamps Stamps where colours or papers have faded through exposure to light, chemicals or water.

Faidherbe French Colonial key type.

Faked Stamp Stamp which has been treated to disguise defects in its condition.

Fancy Cancel Postmark with a pictorial design.

Fantasy Stamps Pieces of paper which purport to be postage stamps but bear the names of imaginary places.

Farley's Follies American stamps of 1934-7 released imperforate on the authority of the Postmaster General James A Farley.

Fastpost New Zealand service giving accelerated domestic overnight delivery and overseas airmail on payment of a fee.

FCP Fluorescent coated paper

FDC First Day Cover

Federation International de Philatelie (q.v FIP) Association of national philatelic federations set up in 1926 to safeguard the interests of stamp collectors at an international level. It also accredits major International Philatelic exhibitions.

Feldpost (German) Field Post Office.

FEPA Federation of European Philatelic Societies.

Field Post Office (FPO) A Post Office established for use by troops on active service.

Fictitious Stamp Any Facsimile, imitation or representation of any stamp.

Fifth Clause Post From fifth clause of Act of Parliament 1801 authorising under guarantee certain village posts for the conveyance of letters to the neighbouring post town.

Figure Type Design in which a numeral is the most prominent feature.

FIP (q.v Federation International de Philatelie)

First Day Cover (FDC) Cover bearing a postmark showing that the stamp was used on the first day of issue.

First Flight Cover Souvenir covers carried on flights inaugurating new airmail routes or new airmail services.

FISA Abbreviation for Federation Internationale des Societies Aerophilateliques.

Fiscal Cancellation of Postage Stamps Many postage stamps have been validated for payment of revenue or fiscal duties and taxes.

Fiscal Stamps Term used to denote issues made for payment of tax, duty or fees other than postage.(q.v Revenue Stamps)

Flag Cancellation Type of machine postmark in which a design resembling a flag is substituted for the usual wavy line.

Flamme illustré (French) pictorial slogan postmark.

Flat Plate Printing plate that is flat as opposed to one which is curved or cylindrical. The process in which it is used is called flat bed printing.

Flats Sorting Machine

Flaw Common philatelic term which refers to any blemish in a stamp's design.

Flexography A form of rotary letterpress printing which derives its name from the use of flexible rubber plates and quick drying inks.

Floating Safe Mail Mail carried in a special fire proof safe aboard ship.

Flong A papier maché sheet used to make a mould from which a stereotype (q.v) is made.

Flown Cover Covers or cards which bear markings to show that they were carried by airmail.

Fluorescence Some stamp inks fluoresce in different colours when viewed under ultra violet light.

FM (French) Franchise Militaire. Postage stamps overprinted FM given to servicemen allowing them freedom from basic postage.

Foil Stamps Stamps printed on paper faced with metal foil.

Folded Transfer In Lithography (q.v) when a transfer (q.v) used in building up a design on the printing base becomes folded part of the stamp's design will show signs of the fold.

Forces Mail Mail sent by troops serving in the field during wars and military campaigns.

Foreign Mail Stamps Stamps issued by several countries specifically for use on mail going overseas.

Forerunners Term used to describe the historical predecessors of a philatelic group or issue.

Forgery Fraudulent imitations of stamp designs, overprints, surcharges or cancellations. Forgeries are produced to defraud either collectors or the revenue or for wartime propaganda purposes.

Format Describes the shape and size of a stamp.

Formé An assemblage of clichés or type arranged and set up in the correct order for printing.

Forwarding Agent Individuals or organisations undertaking the onward dispatch of mail.

FPO Field Post Office

Fractional Controls Public accountancy marks consisting of a letter above two figures separated with a bar. These were printed in the sheet margins of GB photogravure stamps between 1934 and 1947.

Fractional Stamps Stamps which are specially designed so that they can be divided into parts.

Frakturschrift Type of printing used in Germany until 1940 common in overprints and stamp inscriptions.

Frama Labels Postage stamps produced by micro processor machines manufactured by the Frama Company of Switzerland.

Frame Outer border of a stamp design (q.v Duty Plate).

Franchise Stamps Private stamps which are issued to charitable or national institutions to permit mail bearing these stamps to go through the mail free of charge.

Frank From the days of Queen Elizabeth I to those of Queen Victoria, Ministers, Members of both Houses of Parliament and certain other privileged persons could "Frank" correspondence by signing their names on the front. Letters so franked were delivered free.

Frank Stamps Stamps issued by some countries to show that no postage is payable.

Free Frank or Front Cut out front of a letter showing the name and address, together with the endorsement of the sender, date of posting and signature entitling the sender to frank the letter.

Free Mail mail transmitted free of charge.

Freepost A service licensed by Royal Mail to business which enables customers to write to a business without having to pay postage. The licensee pays the postage.

Fresh Entry Term used in line engraved recess printing when a faulty design on a plate is replaced by a new impression before stamps are printed q.v Re-entry

Front The address side of an envelope from which the back has been detached.

FRPSL Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Fugitive Inks Inks which run when in contact with water etc or which fade if exposed to a bright light.

Full Face Portraits of persons on stamps facing full front.

Fumigated Mail Mail which has been treated to prevent the spread of infection (q.v Disinfected Mail)

G.C.Paper (Grande Consommation) emergency paper used for certain French stamps during and after WWI.

Galvanotyping Term synonymous with electro typing.

Garter Watermark Watermark representing the insignia of the Order of the Garter, large, medium and small.

Gauge Term describing both stamp separation and the instrument used to measure them (q.v Perforation Gauge)

General Collection One that embraces stamps of many countries.

General Letter Office Name by which the British Post Office was originally known.

General Postal Union Original name for the Universal Postal Union (q.v)

Generic Smilers In addition to Customised Smilers sheets (q.v Smilers) Royal; Mail provides the stamps with a printed motif on the labels in place of a personal photograph.

Germania the longest lived German stamp also used in many German Colonies.

Glacé Paper Paper that has been given a glossy finish by glazing with friction or applied heat.

Glider Mail Mail conveyed by glider.

Goats Eyes Nickname for the second issue Brazilian stamps.

Goldbeaters Skin A thin translucent resin based paper used for the 1886 parcel stamps of Germany.

Government Parcels Overprint on British stamps used for parcels dispatched on government service.

G.P.U. General Postal Union.(q.v)

Grande Consommation see GC

Granite Paper Paper having coloured cotton, linen, jute or wool fibres embodied within it.

Graphite Line Vertical black lines printed on the back of certain British stamps in 1957 for experiments in automatic sorting.

Gravure Printing by which the ink is held in tiny cells etched into the cylinder. Once known as photogravure (q.v) when photography was involved in the process.

Greetings Stamps Special stamps issued with labels attached giving various forms of greeting.

GRI Georgius Rex Imperator.

Grille A security device in the form of small square dots embossed on certain stamps of the USA and Peru devised by C.F Steel of National Bank Note Company 1861-62.

Guarantee Mark Mark on stamp to indicate that it is authorised for postal purposes.

Guaranteed Delivery Service introduced by Royal Mail (1993) with distinctive labels and stationery guaranteeing delivery by mid-day on the day following posting see Special Delivery..

Guerrilla Stamps Stamps issued by guerrilla forces dating from 1895.

Guide Arrow Marginal mark on stamp sheets indicating the centre point of the sheet or pane.

Guide Lines and Dots Fine lines or dots marked upon the plate as a guide for the engraver when transferring impressions.

Guilloché (French) Engine turning (q.v).

Gum The adhesive substance found on the back of stamps when sold to the public to enable the stamp to be stuck to the envelope etc.

Gum Breaker Bars Lines on the gummed side of stamps breaking up the pattern of the gum and preventing the stamps from curling.

Gutter The space left between two panes of stamps can be vertical or horizontal to allow them to be guillotined, if required.

Hair lines Diagonal white lines which cross the outer corners of stamps printed from the reserve plates.

Half Tone Process A photo mechanical method of representing light and shade by dots of varying size, extensively used for the reproduction of illustrations in newspapers and magazines.

Hand Made Paper Paper made by hand in moulds and thus in separate sheets instead of machine made continuous rolls.

Hand Painted Colour applied to a stamp by hand after printing.

Handstamp Implement used to apply a postmark by hand.

Handstruck Postage Stamps Marks made by a handstamp direct on to postal packets to show pre-payment of postage.

Harrow Perforations A means of perforating whole sheets at a single stroke.

Harvesters Name given to the reaper design stamps of Hungary.

Hatching Series of shading lines usually parallel and close together.

Hawid Strip Clear plastic strip with adhesive backing used to hold mint stamps on an album page without wetting the gum.

Head Plate One of a pair of plates used for printing key type designs. The head plate is used to print the portrait.

Health Stamps Stamps bearing a premium for combating disease.

Hectograph Method of printing from a gelatine base which holds a design in a special dye.

Helecon A chemical substance of the zinc sulphide group added to printing ink to facilitate electronic sorting of mail.

Helicopter Mail Mail carried by Helicopter.

Heliogravure French term for photogravure.

Hidden Dates Date of manufacture of postage stamps concealed somewhere in the design.

High Value Packets Parcels of banknotes and security documents sent through the post on behalf of the clearing banks 1970-73, sometimes distinguished by red labels inscribed HVP (q.v)

Highway Post Office Motor Vehicle used in USA to operate a postal service in rural areas.

Hinge Thin transparent gummed slip used for affixing stamps to an album page.

HM/OW Her Majesty's Office of Works

Holed Cancellation Stamps from which holes have been punched out for cancellation.

Hologram Device creating a three-dimensional effect in different colours when tilted or angled to the light.

Honour Envelope Envelope bearing an inscription signifying its use by forces on active service who certified on their honour that the contents did not disclose any military matters.

Hooded Datestamp A circular datestamp having an additional concentric segment around the top in the form of a hood for the purpose of containing a distinctive inscription.

Hotel Posts Stamps used in connection with postal services organised by hotels in remote areas.

HPO Highway [Head?] Post Office

Humidor A humidifying box or sweat box for removing unwanted paper from stamps.

HVP High Value Packet (q.v).

HWDC Heathrow World Distribution Centre

Hydrogen Peroxide A chemical bleaching and cleaning fluid.

Hyphen Perforation Form of perforation in which paper is punched out in narrow strips instead of the usual round holes.

Ideal Stamp British post office competition held at the 1912 Jubilee International Stamp Exhibition. The winning design was not accepted for use by the post office!

Ident Code letter or number printed during the automatic sorting of mail to identify the sorter or machine.

Illegal Postage Postage stamps which are regarded as illegal or those which contravene the postal laws of one or more countries e.g. Rhodesia

Illegal Stamp A stamp that carries the name of a legitimate country but was not authorised by the postal administration of that country for production.

I.L.O. International Labour Office

Imitation Perforations Simulated perforations printed around stamps.

IMP Integrated Mail Processor

IMPEX IMP without the segregation and culling section

Imperforate Stamps printed on paper not perforated and not provided with other means of easy separation other than by scissors or knife..

Imperforate Between stamps normally perforated but with a line of perforations inadvertently omitted between adjoining rows due to faulty manufacture.

Impressed Stamp applied by a machine to paper to leave an impression e.g. a revenue stamp

Imprimatur Before the early stamps of Great Britain were issued to the public an Imprimatur or registration sheet was printed on watermarked paper and in the colour selected for the denomination/colour to be registered at Somerset House. Normally it refers to an individual stamp from the registration sheet.

Imprimés (French) Printed papers sent by post

Imprint The name of the printer inscribed in the sheet margins.

Imprint Block A block of stamps taken from a part of the sheet where the printer's name or imprint is located in the margin.

India Paper A thin soft absorbent paper of Chinese or Japanese origin made from Bamboo fibres used in taking fine proofs from the engraved plates.

Indicator Marking A group of letters etc. printed to the left of a meter mark.

Inflation Issues Stamps with a huge face value e.g. Germany 1923.

Ink Mixture of pigments, oils, varnishes, driers, toners with compounds and fugitive chemicals made in accordance with the type of printing process.

Ink Jet Slogan Inscription applied by ink jet printer to covers during automatic sorting.

Inland Mail Stamps Stamps meant for internal mail and thus inscribed.

Inland Revenue Inscription found on British fiscal stamps to denote their use to pay tax or revenue charges

Inselpost (German) Island post (Channel Islands during WWII).

Inserted by Hand A minor type of hand painting in which missing accents have been touched in on the stamp manually.

Instructional Labels, Marks and Etiquettes Widely used by postal authorities to indicate special handling of mail in transit, e.g. fragile, perishable.

Insured Mail Letters, packets, parcels insured against loss on the payment of a special fee by the sender.

Intaglio Plate engraved with incised lines or cuts for printing.

Intelpost Electronic facsimile system for the transmission of documents.

Interim Sorting Machine

Intermediate Die A die made from the original die to facilitate alterations being effected.

Intermediate Perforations Perforations by Perkins Bacon printings of 1860s in which perforations produced by a certain machine deteriorated from the original clean cut to intermediate and finally rough.

Internal Four State Code coding system used on mail by Royal Mail

International Reply Coupons Slips issued by member countries of the UPU to provide a convenient method of sending the reply postage with letters sent overseas.

Internee Mail Correspondence from persons interned during time of war.

Interpanneau An interpanneau pair consists of two stamps with a blank label in between.

Interpostal Seals Circular adhesive labels used to seal the flap of an envelope or to signify official correspondence.

Interrupted Mail Mail which has been detained or delayed.

Interrupted Perforation A means of strengthening strips of stamps used in vending machines where gaps are created in the line of perforations by the omission or wider spacing of certain pins.

Invalidated Stamp Postage stamp which has been demonetised or is no longer available for prepayment of postage.

Inverted Centre A stamp in which the central vignette is upside down in relation to the frame.

Inverted Frame A stamp in which the frame is upside down in relation to the centre.

Inverted Overprint A stamp whose overprint is upside down in relation to the stamp.

Inverted Watermark Watermark upside down in relation to the image of the stamp.

Inward Vouching Office

I.R. Inland Revenue

Iriodin A type of ink which gives a shiny iridescent effect to the solid part of the background. Used as a security feature.

Irregular Perforations Perforations out of alignment or of mixed gauge.

Issue Term used to denote the quantity of stamps of given design or date sent out for public use.

Ivory Head Uncoloured area of the head of Queen Victoria on 1841 1d red of Great Britain when seen from the back. Blueing in the paper caused by printing of ink that contained prussiate of potash on damp paper. The area of the head had less ink, so the white shadow of the head becomes apparent.

Japanese Paper Soft fine paper made from the bark of the mulberry tree, long fibres accounting for its strength.

Joined Paper Paper with a slight overlap where two strips of stamps from a sheet have been joined at the selvage to form a continuous coil.

Joint Issue An issue of stamps by two or more independent countries to commemorate the same event.

Joint Line The coloured line that often appears between coil stamps where the curved plate on a rotary press meet.

Journal Stamps Low value stamps specially designed and produced to prepay postage on newspapers, periodicals etc.

Journal Tax Stamps Stamps denoting taxes on newspapers but often conferring free transmission through the post.

Jubilee Line Coloured lines printed in the sheet or pane margins of certain British and Commonwealth issues. They were included on the printing plates for technical reasons to enable better prints to be made.

Judenpost (German) Jewish post

Junk Mail Term used for unsolicited advertising mail.

Jusqu'a Mark A mark found usually on airmail meaning "as far as" followed by the name of a terminal.

KEVII King Edward the Seventh of Great Britain

KEVIII King Edward the Eighth of Great Britain

Key Plate The plate which prints the general design on stamps, specifically certain British Commonwealth issues requiring two separate printings.

Key Type Term for uniform design used in stamps of many colonial empires in the 19th & 20th centuries.

KGV King George the Fifth of Great Britain

KGVI King George the Sixth of Great Britain

Killer Cancellation An cancellation that completely obliterates a postage stamp.

Kiloware Used stamps on piece sold by weight.

KuK (German) Kaiserliche und Königliche Imperial and Royal

Label Any philatelic item not valid for postage.

Labelled Stamps Stamps with labels.

Lady McLeod The ship depicted on a local stamp of Trinidad issued by David Bryce the owner and captain in April 1847 to prepay the carriage on letters carried by the vessel between Port of Spain and San Francisco.

Laid Paper Paper which shows a pattern of watermarked lines set closely together.

Language of Stamps Angle of placement of stamp on a letter may indicate a message of a romantic nature.

Last Day Cover Souvenir posted on the last day of an issue of stamps.

Late Fee Charge made on mail posted after the normal collection hours to catch the last post.

Laureated Issue Portrait has a laurel leaf see French issue of 1862-70.

Lazaret q.v Disinfected Mail

League of Nations Stamps Swiss postage stamps overprinted "Société de Nations"

Letter Card Postal Stationery consisting of a folded card with or without an imprinted postage stamp and gummed outer edges. q.v Air Mail Letter Cards

Letter of Marque Government Permit allowing a specific ship to sail without convoy, the more speedily to deliver mail.

Letterpress Form of printing from a relief surface.

Lettersheet A piece of paper, intended to have a message placed upon it and to be folded for transmission.

Life Insurance Stamps Postage stamps used on mail of the Government Life Insurance Department of New Zealand.

Line Block Term relating to a block of stamps showing the gutter lines which are printed to mark the divisions of the stamp sheet into quarters or halves.

Line Engraving A method of engraving lines in recess on steel or copper to produce plates suitable for the Intaglio process.

Line Perforation Perforation applied in straight lines and covering either the width or the length of the whole sheet in one perforating operation.

LIS Letter Information Sample/System

Lithography A printing process.

Local Carriage Labels Labels which prepay postage in areas where the post office does not provide a collection or delivery service.

Local Stamps Stamp issues used within a limited area of a town or district or over a particular land, sea or air route.

London Prints Postage stamps printed in London from plates manufactured there.

Loose Letter Term used to denote a letter arriving at an office of delivery or transit without cancellation or postmark of origin.

Love Stamps Postage stamps issued for use on greetings cards on St Valentine's Day.

LQM linear quality mark: rear marking on mail processed by IMP

Luchtpost (Dutch) Airmail.

Luftfeldpost (German) Military airmail

Luftpost (German) Airmail

Lugpos (Afrikaans) Airmail

Luminescence The glow emitted by a stamp when put under ultraviolet light.

Machine Cancellation The obliteration of postage stamps by mechanical means.

Machin British definitive stamps issued since 1967 the Queen's head on which was designed by Arnold Machin.

Madam Joseph Pseudonym for a forger of cancellations struck on genuine unused postage stamps of the British Commonwealth.

Magnifier A magnifying glass for the close examination of stamps.

Mailcoach Horse drawn coaches used for the transport of mail.

Mailomat A system of automatic stamps used in USA and Canada using Pitney Bowes postage meters adapted for use as coin-operated machines.

Mailsort A facility offered to business users by Royal Mail

Major Varieties Variations of importance either in type, colour, design or format from the basic design.

Make-ready q.v. Découpage

Maltese Cross A cross of eight points, formed of four triangles with their top points meeting in the centre and their bases indented. Also used to describe the obliterating device used in Great Britain to cancel early adhesive stamps in the period 1840-44.

Manilla Paper A coarse strong paper of light texture originally manufactured from manila hemp.

Manuscript Overprint Handwriting applied to a stamps face to denote some special use or particular value.

Map Paper Paper used for Latvia's first stamps printed on German military maps.

Margin Paper surrounding a single sheet, pane or sheet.

Margin Wing The extra unprinted margin

Marginal Advertising Announcement of commercial nature printed in the sheet margins.

Marginal Guide Marks Marks in the margins of sheets of stamps serving as a guide for the printer in perforating and trimming the sheets.

Marginal Inscription Inscriptions in sheet margins of stamps which may include printer's name.

Marianne Figure symbolising France featured on some post war issues.

Marine Post Offices Post Offices operating on board ships.

Maritime Mail Mail taken ashore from naval vessels and entitled to free postage.

Master Die An original die from which secondary dies etc are derived in the production of printing plates.

Matched Pair Two stamps from the same position of a printing plate but printed at different times and in different colours.

Matrix Printing term for a mould which is used to describe the counterpart of a die.

Maximaphilately Study of maximum cards.

Maximum Card Postcards on which the picture shown has the same theme as the stamp and postmark. The term should not be applied where the picture side is a complete reproduction of the stamp. However Royal Mail regularly issue postcards (also described as PHQ Cards q.v for new stamp issues with enlarged reproductions of the stamps, and incorrectly describes them as maximum cards.

MB (Moveable Box) A post box on a quayside and aboard packet boats in which mail could be posted up to the last moment when the quayside box was taken aboard. On arrival at the ship's destination, the contents of the box were processed at the nearest post office and postmarked MB or BM (Boite Mobile). Service was discontinued at the outbreak of the second World War.

MDEC Manual Data Entry Centre

Medallions Name for the stamps of Belgium 1849-50.

MEF Middle East Forces WW2

Mermaid Cancel Postmark used in Ireland incorporating a figure as on the prow of a ship.

Merson French key type 1900-27 from the name of the designer Luc-Olivier Merson.

Mesh The texture of paper

Metallic Ink Ink which leaves a shiny surface when it dries.

Meter Mark The impression upon metered mail which indicates postage has been paid.

Meter Tape Strip of gummed paper used for affixing meter stamps to bulky objects.

Metered Mail Mail franked by an automatic machine to show that postage has been paid.

Micromosaic A process to create portraits from hundreds of tiny images.

Micron A unit of measurement of the thickness of paper. One millionth part of a metre.

Microprocessor Equipment capable of microscopic printing.

Mileage Marks Postal markings which include the name of a place and a number indicating its distance from a central reference point, usually the capital of the country concerned.

Milt Adm Abbreviation for "Military Administration"

Military Franchise Stamps Stamps permitting military forces to send letters etc free of postage (q.v FM)

Millésime (French) Numbers recording the year of printing on certain stamps of France.

Mimeograph Similar to Cyclostyle (q.v).

Miniature Sheet Sheet of stamps smaller than normal and often containing only one stamp or specimen of each denomination in a series.

Minor Varieties Slight variations from the normal stamp, of interest to specialist collectors.

Mint Condition Stamp in a perfect condition, uncanceled and having its original gum.

Mirror Print An impression which is a mirror image of the intended stamp design.

Misplaced Colour Shift of colour caused by the printing process.

Mission Mixture Used stamps sold by weight from religious organisations.

Missionaries Name for first stamps of Hawaii.

Mixed Franking Term used by collectors to denote covers bearing the stamps of two or more countries.

Mixed Perforation A sheet bearing misplaced perforations of one gauge and also correctly applied perforations of another gauge.

MLO Mechanised Letter Office

Mobile Post Office Caravan, trailer or vehicle equipped for use as a travelling post office.

Moiré A pattern of wavy lines simulating watered silk, printed on postage stamps as a security device.

Money Letter Letter containing coin or banknotes.

Monster (Dutch) Specimen

Mother Die The original engraved die in line engraving.

Mouchon French key type of 1900 named after designer Eugène Louis Mouchon.

Mould Counterparts of a die used for shaping or casting metal to form a printing plate.

Mount A stamp hinge.

Mount Everest Expedition Poster Stamps (q.v) designed to raise funds for the 1924 Everest Expedition.

Mounted Mint Unused stamp showing traces of stamp mounts on reverse.

Mounting Term for sticking a stamp on an album page by means of a hinge.

Mourning Stamps Special stamps released in mourning for heads of state and other important people.

Moveable Box q.v MB

Mrs Simpson Facsimiles Facsimiles of letters carried by balloon from Paris during the siege 1870/1 addressed to Mrs Simpson of London and bearing copies of the appropriate stamps and postal markings.

MTT Machine de tri a tasseurs

Muestra (Spanish) Specimen applied to stamps distributed by the UPU

Mulready The first letter sheets and envelopes officially issued in Great Britain in 1840, with prepaid postage, designed by Wm Mulready.

Mulready Caricature The official Mulready cover and envelope was not popular. Private firms printed envelopes and covers in many numerous designs ridiculing the official stationery, resulting in its disuse. The caricatures did not prepay postage and ordinary adhesive stamps had to be affixed.

Multilingual Postmarks and Stamps Postmarks and stamps inscribed in two or more languages.

Multiple A group of stamps, usually of the same denomination, still attached to one another as sold by the post Office.

Munich Pink First printing of Swiss Strubel stamps in 1854

Muster (German) Specimen.

Mute Cancellation Obliterations void of any inscription to denote time and place of postings. (q.v Dumb cancel).

Name Tablet That part of a key type in which the name of the country is inserted.

Napier Perforation Perforations from machines constructed by David Napier & Sons, Lambeth.

Native Paper A paper produced locally from native products.

Naval Mail Mail from ships of navies of various countries.

Ne Pas Livrer le Dimanche (French) Do not deliver on Sundays (q.v Dominical Label)

Network A security pattern printed on stamp paper usually before the stamp designs are printed.

New Issue service Where a dealer agrees to supply and a collector agrees to pay for all new issues of a chosen country (ies)

Newspaper Stamps Stamps for prepaying postage on newspapers.

Newspaper Tax Stamps Impressed or adhesive stamps for the prepayment of tax on newspapers and periodicals.

New Year Stamps Special stamps to commemorate the New Year.

NH Never hinged

Nightrider Special overnight parcel delivery service of Royal Mail.

Nippon (Japanese) Japan

Non Value Indicator Stamp (NVI) Term used by Royal Mail for a stamp which bears no monetary amount but shows the class of postage.

Numeral Cancellations Obliterations which incorporate numbers as means of identifying the office of posting.

OAS On Active service.

OAT Onward Air Transmission.

Oblique Roulette A type of separation in which the cuts are aslant and parallel. Also known as "Percé en lignes oblique"

Obliteration Term meaning the cancellation of stamps.

Obsolescent Stamps about to go off sale.

Obsolete No longer available over the Post Office counter.

Occupation Stamps Stamps overprinted or specially issued for use in territory occupied by military forces.

OCP Ordinary Coated Paper

OCR Optical Character Recognition

Odontometre Instrument for measuring the number of perforation holes in a length of 2cm. q.v Perforation Gauge

OE Office of Exchange

Off Centre Term used to denote inaccurate perforation resulting in unequal unprinted margins around the stamp design.

Off Paper Used stamps which have been soaked off their backing paper.

Offices Abroad Postal Agency of one country in another.

Official Labels Printed labels provided by Postal Authorities to denote services rendered other than those prepaid by means of postage stamps.

Official Paid Inscription on postmarks, stationery and adhesive labels used by government departments instead of official stamps or handstruck or machine stamps.

Official Stamps Stamps for use on government correspondence.

Offset Litho Printing process in which the image on the printing plate is not applied directly to the paper but printed first onto a rubber covered cylinder which deposits the image on to the paper.

og Original Gum.

OHMS On Her (His) Majesty's Service.

Omnibus Issues Sets of stamps in a common design as those issued in several territories simultaneously and only differing in the names of the countries and the values inscribed on them.

On Paper Term for adhesive stamps which have been cut from envelopes and are still attached to their paper backing. Also known as Kiloware (q.v)

On Piece An adhesive stamp on part of an envelope which usually shows the complete postmark or other information.

Opt Overprint

Orb Watermark Representation of part of the British Regalia showing the globe surmounted by a cross used as a watermark device.

O.R. (French) Origin Rurale. A handstruck mark applied to mail handed to a letter carrier in rural areas of France.

Original A term used to denote a stamp officially issued for postal use as opposed to a reprint.

Original Gum A stamp which still possesses all or some of the gum with which it was issued.

O.S. "On Army Service"

Out of Register One or more colours in printing being out of alignment with the others.

Overland Mail Term for mail on any route across western Asia.

Overlay Packing substance used in relief printing (letterpress) to ensure that proper pressure is applied to each part of the stamp's design at the time of printing.

Overnight Delivery Stamps High value stamps issued in USA to prepay special handling fees on express packets sent overnight.

Overprint An additional feature or inscription applied to the face of a stamp after basic production has been completed.

Overseas Dominions Essay Printer's sample stamp produced by De La Rue to solicit orders from prospective customers.

OVO Outward Vouching Office: distribution office for designated postcode area

Oxidized Stamps whose colour was originally red, yellow or orange which have turned deep brown or black due to atmospheric pollution.

OXO Postmark One of the obliterators used to cancel British forces mail in the Crimean war (1854-57).

Packet Letter The British Post Office operated a fleet of specially equipped Packet Boats which offered the public a speedier and safer service. To defray costs the letter rate was higher than the private vessels. Letters were market "Packet" (q.v Ship Letter)

PAF Postcode Adress File

PAG Pay and Go

Paid Postmark A postmark usually applied indicating prepayment of postage in cash rather than by an adhesive.

Pair Two stamps joined horizontally.q.v Vertical pair

Pakke-Porto Parcel post stamps issued by Royal Greenland Trading Company.

Palimpsest Re-used Parchment. Material upon which two or more writings are found, one superimposed upon the other. The earlier writing was supposed to be erased but is often visible as well as the more recent.

Palms French Colony key type used in West Africa 1906-1913.

Pane The sub section or part of a sheet of stamps.

Pantograph Instrument for mechanically copying a flat design on the same or an altered scale.

Paper Material of closely compacted wood or cloth fibres.

Paper Error Stamps printed on paper of the wrong colour or watermark.

Paper Makers Watermark A normal watermark incorporating the maker's name.

Papier Maché Mould Stereos (q.v) are often cast from a mould made of Papier Maché (see Flong)

Papillon de Metz Message carried by balloon from Metz during siege August-October 1870.

Paquebot French for packet boat and an international term for mail posted on board ship.

Paraph A flourish of a signature or the contraction of a signature see overprinted stamps of Cuba used in Puerto Rico 1873-76.

Par Avion By aeroplane.

Par Ballon Monté By manned balloon.

Par Ballon Non Monté By unmanned balloon.

Parachute Mail A form of airmail in which mail is delivered by parachute from an aeroplane.

Parcel Label Adhesive label issued to every GB Post Office in 1883 to affix to parcels, used until 1918.

Parcel Postmark A postal marking used for parcel post.

Parcel Stamps Adhesives used for the prepayment of parcel postage.

Parcelforce Name of Royal Mail parcel service.

Parliamentary Envelopes Preprinted stationery that could only be bought and posted by Members of Parliament from 16 January 1840 following the abolition of franking of letters by Members from 10 January. This ceased once adhesives were issued on 6 May 1840

Part Perforation A stamp where the perforation is incomplete.

Patriotic Cover Pictorial covers with a patriotic theme used in wartime to raise morale.

PD A handstamp applied to covers indicating postage has been paid to destination.

Peace & Commerce French and Colonial key type introduced in 1876.

Peace & Navigation French Colonial key type adopted in 1892.

Pearls Design feature consisting of solid or outlined circles.

Pelure Paper (French) Very thin, hard and rough paper.

Pen Cancellation Postal defacement applied by pen and ink to a postage stamp.

Penalty Stamps & Stationery Stationery intended for use on official correspondence in the USA with a warning printed on the envelope that improper use may incur a penalty.

Penny Black World's first adhesive postage stamp introduced in Great Britain in 1840.

Penny Post A postal service delivering letters within a limited area for a penny.

Penny Red 1d stamps of Great Britain successors to the Penny Black.

Percé (French) Pierced

Percé en Arc (French) Arc pierced.

Percé en Lignes (French) Line pierced.

Percé en Lignes de Couleur (French) Line pierced in colour.

Percé en Lignes Obliques (French) Pierce in oblique lines.

Percé en Losanges (French) Lozenge pierced.

Percé en Points (French) Pin Pierced or perforated

Percé en Pointes (French) Zig-Zag pierced.

Percé en Scie (French) Saw toothed pierced.

Percé en Serpentine (French) Pierced in wavy lines.

Perçue (French) paid

Percussion à Froid Method of striking dies and punches in cold metal.

Perfins Stamps which have been perforated with a series of holes arranged to form letters e.g. initials of companies, or other outlines to protect commercial firms against theft of stamps.

Perforation A means of making the separation of individual stamps easier by removing small pieces of paper from gutters between the stamps. (q.v Chad) The gauge of the perforation is denoted by the number of holes in a space of 2cms (perf 14 etc).

Perforation Gauge An instrument designed to enable the gauge of perforations of stamps. Invented by Dr J.A Legrand who gave it the name "Odontomètre" (q.v).

Perkins Bacon Process The method of producing line engraved plates invented by Jacob Perkins.

Perkins Paper An azure safety paper invented by Dr Perkins and used on the 1855-6 and other GB issues.

Permit Mailing The authorised posting of mail without adhesive stamps.

Personal Delivery Stamps Stamps issued to ensure that mail was delivered to the addressee only.

Personalised Stamps Stamps with a non postal label attached bearing an image derived from a personal photograph.

PF (French) Payée à Frontier. Postage prepaid to the frontier of a country .

Phantasy A bogus stamp.

Philatelic Agencies Commercial organisations which handle the philatelic sales and publicity of a country's stamps.

Philatelic Bureau Agency which handles the sale of philatelic items.

Philatelic Congress of Great Britain Initiated at Manchester in 1909 and comprises of an affiliation of Philatelic Societies throughout Great Britain.

Philatelic Document Document giving details of a stamp with a space for the stamp itself (see Document Philatelique Officiel).

Philatelic Exhibition Stamp show open to the public sponsored by stamps clubs, dealers or the postal authorities,

Philatelic Handling Labels Labels provided by some postal authorities for collectors to affix to covers to obtain careful handling.

Philatelist A student of postage stamps.

Philately The study of postage stamps and associated areas.

Phonopost UPU mail classification for gramophone records, approved 1939.

Phosphor Stamps overprinted, inked or impregnated with phosphorescent or fluorescent substances for use in electronic letter facing and cancelling machines.

Phosphor Dots and Bars Patterns of dots or bars produced by phosphorescent or fluorescent substances applied to mail to translate the postcode from an alpha numeric sequence to a medium which can be read by sorting machines.

Phosphor Graphite Stamps of Great Britain issued in 1959 with graphite lines on back and phosphor lines (q.v) on the front.

Phosphor Lines Bands of phosphorescent material printed on the face of stamps to activate letter facing and cancelling machines and sort into first and second class.

Photogravure Method of stamp production where the design is photographed to produce a master negative. The images are transferred to produce a glass plate.

Photolithography A process of multiplying a design by repeated photographic exposure.

PHQ Cards Postcards reproducing postage stamps produced by Royal Mail since 1973.

Pictorial Postmarks Handstruck marks and machine cancels which include a pictorial element.

Pictorial Stamps Stamps with a picture design.

Pigeon Post Messages carried by pigeon, usually in the form of microfilm.

Pillar Box and Post-boxes Public post boxes introduced in the 1650's for the receipt of mail.

Pillars Narrow lined rectangles forming a type of ornamentation in the pane gutters on a stamp sheet.

Pin Perforation (French Percé en points) Type of stamp separation applied by piercing the paper with sharp pointed pins.

PiP Pricing in Proportion

Planography Printing from a smooth surface that is neither raised nor recessed.

Plate Flat piece of engraved steel or copper from which stamps are printed.

Plate Flaw Blemish on a stamp caused by damage to the printing plate.

Plate Number Number printed in a sheet margin to identify the plate from which the stamps were printed.

Plate Proof The trial impressions from the printing plate before the actual issue. Usually they are ungummed and printed on card.

Plate Varieties Variations between stamps on any one particular sheet caused by irregularities on the printing plate.

Plating (see under Reconstruction)

Plebiscite Stamps Stamps issued by temporary independent postal authorities in towns and districts while their future nationality is determined.

Plug Part of a printing plate plugged into the main design.

Pmk Abbreviation for postmark (q.v)

Pneumatic Post A system of conveying letters and cards by pneumatic tubes.

Poached Egg Name for certain labels used officially for testing British automatic vending machines in 1936/37.

Pochette Small transparent envelope used for containing a stamp.

Polyvinyl Alcohol Gum Adhesive substance which is invisible and non curling employed on many stamps since the 1960s.

Porte Timbre (French) Label that contains a box within the design for the regular postage stamp.

Porto Postage.

Positional Block Block showing a variety known to occur on a particular stamp in the sheet.

Post-A-Book A service of the British Post Office operated through book shops as a convenient way of sending books through the post.

Post Box q.v Pillar Box

Post Bus Mail Bus

Post Office Place for reception of mail for delivery to addressees.

Post Offices Abroad Post Offices staffed and operated by one country located in another country.

Post Road Public highway whose use is authorised by law.

Postage Due Amount to be paid for an non or under franked letter.

Postage Due Labels Labels showing the amount to be paid on un or under franked letters.

Postage Paid Impressions Handstruck marks applied to bulk postings of mail prepaid in cash.

Postage Stamp A label, usually gummed, indicating the amount of money prepaid for postage.

Postal Card Government produced card with a special imprinted stamp which doesn't exist as an adhesive postage stamp.

Postal Concessionary Label Label sold through the NAAFI for use of British servicemen in Egypt.

Postal Fiscal Fiscal or Revenue stamps which have been authorised for postal use.

Postal Forgery A counterfeit stamp prepared to defraud the postal authorities.

Postal Frank term used to denote accountancy labels prepared by the British Vice Consul in Madagascar.

Postal Historian A Student of the operation and development of postal services.

Postal History A study of the development of the postal services.

Postal Mechanisation The study of the development of the mechanised handling of the mail.

Postal Stationery An item of stationery that has been printed specially by a postal authority to show the prepayment of postage.

Postal Surcharge Overprint on stamps used for accounting purposes and were not valid for postage (occurs on Cyprus stamps).

Postal Telegraphs Stamps originally issued for use on telegrams.

Postally Used A stamp which has been used to prepay postage.

Postbus Ticket The Postbus services operating in the UK since 1967 use distinctive tickets with the value indicated by means of adhesive stamps (q.v).

Postcard A type of postal stationery consisting of small sheets of pasteboard or cardboard which can be sent by post usually at a lower rate than letters.

Postcard Stamp Postage stamps specially prepared for prepaying postage on postcards.

Postcode A group of numbers or a combination of letters and numbers devised to translate an address into a code which can be used for automatic sorting.

Posted on Board Persons on board ship are entitled to send mail prepaid by means of stamps of the country in which the ship is registered.

Poster Stamps Term used to describe labels, resembling miniature posters, often perforated to advertise tourist attractions, special events and company products, but with no postal validity.

Posthorns Nickname for the definitive issues of Norway since 1872.

Postmark Marks applied in manuscript, handstamp or machine to mail to indicate the place and time of posting.

Postmasters' Stamps Issues made by postmasters usually during an emergency to prepay postage on local mail.

Postnote Type of Postal Stationery introduced in 1982 by British Post office.

Post Office Mauritius The 1d & 2d stamps of Mauritius issued in 1847. The stamps are so called because they are inscribed "Post Office"

Pre-Adhesive A piece of mail posted before the advent of postage stamps.

Precancelled Stamps issued by the post office with cancellations already applied. They are sold in quantity to business firms.

Presentation Pack A philatelic souvenir containing a set of stamps and a description in text.

Pre Sorted Mail Mail sent to the Post Office already sorted which attracts a reduced rate of postage.

Pre Stamp Cover Covers dating from before the introduction of adhesive postage stamps.

Pre-Paid Ticket Adhesive labels sold at hotels and shops in Spain and the Canary Islands for use on tourist mail.

Press Sheet A full sheet of stamps as it was originally printed.

Prestige Booklet A stamp booklet that contains special panes of stamps with descriptive text printed alongside.

Prexies Nickname given to the US Presidential series of definitive stamps of 1938

Primitives Term for early locally produced stamps whose designs were crudely executed.

Printed Matter Circulars, samples and other forms of commercial paper.

Printed on Both Sides Stamps with complete impressions on both sides of the paper front and back.

Printed Watermark Imitation Watermark adopted as a cheap substitute for security paper during a temporary shortage.

Printer's Imprint Printer's name appearing as part of the stamp design or on the sheet selvage.

Printer's Waste Badly or partially printed stamps which should have been rejected by the printer's checkers and not released.

Printex Printing process patented by Motley & Miller of England applying photography to letterpress.

Printing Production run of stamps.

Priority Blue & white labels to denote first class and airmail services.

Prisoner of War Mail Correspondence to or from prisoners of war.

Private Controls Inscriptions overprinted or on reverse of stamps by organisations to prevent theft.

Private Perforation Unofficial perforation applied by private individuals or organisations before perforation methods were generally accepted. Also private roulette.

Private Postmarks Cancellations permitted in some countries for the use of firms or organisations.

Privilege Envelope Envelope giving preferential treatment to a charitable organisation.

Private Postage Stamps Stamps or franks issued to private individuals or organisations as a postal concession on certain mail. Also where, without authority, individuals have produced stamps for events e.g. strikes.

Pro Aero (Switzerland) Inscription on Air Mail Stamps.

Pro Juventute (Switzerland) Stamps issued for children's charities.

Pro Patria (Switzerland) Stamps issued for national cultural funds.

Process Engraving Method of engraving the surface of metal by an acid to produce printing plates.

Proof An impression taken from a die or plate prior to the manufacture of the postage stamp and can be divided into four types die proofs (q.v), engraver's proofs (q.v), plate proofs (q.v), colour proofs (q.v).

Propaganda Forgeries Stamps forged by British Intelligence during both world wars and smuggled into enemy territory to be used by allied agents to frank propaganda leaflets.

Propaganda Leaflets Leaflets bearing propaganda aimed at enemy and enemy occupied countries.

Propaganda Stamps Stamps designed to promote a campaign and get a message across to the public.

Provisional Stamps Stamps whose value or purpose has been altered after printing by means of a surcharge or overprint.

Publicity Postmarks Postmarks produced by post offices to advertise various places or events.

Pubs (French) Timbres de Publicité, Stamps from booklets (q.v) which have advertising labels (q.v) attached.

Punch Perforation A form of cancellation where a hole or pattern of holes is punched across a stamp.

PVA, PVAD Abbreviation for Polyvinyl Alcohol (q.v) and Polyvinyl Alcohol Dextrin gums on reverse of stamps.

Q.D.C (Quem Deus Conservet/Whom God Preserve) Often found in manuscript below the named ship added to early ship letters (q.v) as a talisman.

QEII Queen Elizabeth the Second of Great Britain.

Quadrillé term used to describe an album leaf printed with a fine network of squares as a guide for the arrangement of stamps.

Quadrille Paper Paper watermarked with crossed lines forming a pattern of small squares or rectangles.

Quartz Lamp An electric lamp incorporating a filament in transparent fused quartz, emitting ultraviolet rays.

Quatrefoil Watermark A compound leaf or flower design with four leaflets or petals radiating from the centre.

Queen Enthroned Name for stamps of Victoria 1852 showing a design with Queen Victoria seated on a throne.

QV Queen Victoria.

R Rare

Rag Paper High quality long lasting paper with a high content of rag content.

Railway Air Services Airmail service operated by the Railway Companies in Great Britain during 1934.

Railway Cancellations Cancellations used to indicate handling on mail vans or travelling post offices and on trains.

Railway Company Stamps Local or semi official stamps issued by railway companies mainly to denote fees payable in respect of parcels and in some cases letters.

Railway Letter & Parcel Stamps Stamps produced by railway companies to prepay a special railway letter fee to speed up the handling of letters between railway stations.

Rainbow Trials Impressions of the Penny Black produced in a number of different colours during 1840. This was to test various combinations of coloured inks, papers and cancellations.

Rapid Cancelling Machine

Rayon (French for radius). Used to denote the distance of a place from a central point in European postal tariffs.

R.D.P. Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (q.v)

Readers Digest Coils Multi value strips of stamps were produced by the British Post Office on behalf of Readers Digest to facilitate reply postage.

Receipted Parcels A parcel service operated by the British Post Office similar to Recorded Delivery (q.v).

Recess Printing Process where the design is engraved on the printing plate, the recesses thus formed are filled with ink.

Reconstruction Reconstruction of sheets or blocks of stamps from singles or multiples which vary in some degree throughout the sheet or block.

Recorded Delivery A service of Royal Mail where a receipt is obtained from the addressee introduced into UK in 1961 but now known as "Recorded (Signed for)". For an additional fee items are computer tracked and scanned at the item's final destination.

Recorded Message Stamps Stamps issued by Argentina in 1939 to prepay the fees on messages recorded on discs for transmission by post.

Re-cut Die When a die has been extensively retouched (q.v) it is normally termed re-cut.

Red Cross Message Scheme Used for the exchange of mail between persons living on opposing sides during WW2, operated out of Switzerland.

Red Cross Stamps Stamps either commemorating the Red Cross or bearing a premium in aid of the Red Cross

Red Plates Printing plates used for making Penny red stamps of Great Britain in 1841 (q.v Black Plates)

Redrawn A new printing of a stamp whose design differs in some detail from the original while retaining its principal features.

Reel Fed Stamps printed by presses using continuous reels of paper.

Re-engraving The strengthening of worn parts of the surface of a printing plate.

Re-entry Duplication of part of a line engraved stamp design due to a first impression having been inadequately erased after stamps have been printed and thus allowing traces of its entry to appear in conjunction with the new impression.

Regional Postcards Picture postcards issued by the various regional postal boards in the UK.

Regional Stamps Postal stamps issued by the British Post Office for use in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man. Following the postal independence of Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man, stamps issued for use in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are now described as "Country Issues" q.v

Register Marking Any marking in the sheet margin in the form of lines, dots and arrows, placed as a guide to colour registration.

Registered Envelope Special Envelopes pioneered in GB in 1878 for registered packets and distinguished by crossed blue lines.

Registered Postmarks Special marks applied to registered packets to indicate greater security in transit.

Registration Labels Labels affixed to mail to show that it has been registered. Service now replaced in the United Kingdom by "Royal Mail Special Delivery" with delivery guaranteed by either 9.00am or 12 noon, the following day.

Registration Stamps Special stamps adhesive or postal stationery denoting that the registration fee has been paid.

Regummed A stamp whose original gum has been lost and which has been issued with a fresh layer applied. Maybe also re-gummed to simulate original gum that was earlier removed in use to increase its possible market value.

Reichspost (German) Imperial Post

Reissue A stamp or series of stamps brought back into general use after being withdrawn.

Relief Printing Printing from raised type often referred to as letterpress.

Remainders Unsold stamps on hand after an issues has been taken off sale.

Repair Correction of a damaged or faulty printing plate, cylinder, die or perforation pins.

Repaired Stamp A stamp which has had a fault or defect hidden in order to increase its possible market value.

Reperforated Stamp A stamp which has had perforation applied unofficially to an imperforate or damaged margin.

Replica Copy or imitation of the design and colour of a stamp.

Reply Paid Stationery Envelopes etc bearing inscriptions address and license number to enable firms customers of businesses to reply without paying postage.

Reply Postcards A form of postal stationery consisting of two postcards joined together one with the sender's message, the other for the addressee's reply. (Issued in the United Kingdom from 1882 to 1970).

Repoussage the knocking up of a printing plate from behind for the purpose of raising a dent or of bringing a faulty part of the plate to the necessary height for retouching.

Repp Paper A ribbed paper with a fine ribbing on the surface and not resulting from the watermark.

Reprint Impressions from the original plates, blocks or stones, from which stamps were printed, taken after the issue of the stamps to the Post Office has ceased: impressions printed not for use as stamps, but as specimens for sale to collectors.

Resetting New arrangement of clichés in a plate.

Resinised Paper Paper made transparent by treatment with resin or collodion. Also known as Goldbeater's skin (q.v).

Retail Booklets and Sheetlets Stamps packaged in such a way that they can be conveniently sold in souvenir shops and other places in addition to Post Offices.

Retouch A minor correction effected by hand engraving on a plate or cylinder.

Returned Mail Mail which has been returned to the sender for many reasons but mainly because of an incorrect address.

Reuse Labels Gummed labels affixed across the tops of envelopes which have previously been used (q.v Economy Label).

Revenue Stamp Issues made to pay tax or duty other than postage.

Reversed Print Stamps printed in reverse by accident or design.

Reversed Watermark A watermark which is a mirror print when viewed from the face of the stamp.

Rice Paper A thin paper in a variety of textures, made from the sliced pith of a Formosan tree and sized with rice water.

Rings Term for a type of numerical obliterator consisting of several concentric circle with or without numerals in the centre.

Ripple Gum A gum, adopted by Germany, so broken up as to produce a non curling effect.

Rivet Mark A printed mark on a stamp or sheet margin made by a nail or rivet into the printing plate to secure the printing surface to the mount.

RLO Railway Letter Office; Returned Letter Office

Rocket Stamp A private stamp or label sold to the public to prepay the charges of having a letter sent by rocket.

Rohrpost (German) Pneumatic mail q.v

Roll of Distinguished Philatelists Established in Great Britain in 1921. King George V gave it royal assent and was the first signatory.(q.v R.P.D)

Rolled Gum Gum applied to paper by a machine operated roller.

Roller Cancel Cancel applied by rolling a device across the stamp.

Roller Die Cylindrical die used to produce a recessed printing plate in the Perkins Die and Mill process.

Roller Flaws Flaws in stamp designs caused by imperfections occurring in the roller die.

Roman Type Fount of type used by printers and distinguished by its seriffed capitals.

Rosback Perforation Experimental perforation gauge 12½ applied to USA 1c stamp of 1919.

Rotary Cancellations A hand operated device to speed up the cancellation of stamps.

Rotary Perforation Perforation applied by two counter rotating wheels, one with flat ended pins around the circumference and the other bored with holes to receive the pins.

Rotary Printing Method of printing using curved printing plates that print on continuous rolls of paper.

Rough Perforation Holes and teeth with rough edges, imperfectly cut or punched.

Roulette Form of separation in which slits or holes are made in the paper but none of the paper is actually removed.

Row Value Figures in sheet margins indicating the total value of the stamps in a row.

Royal Mail Postage Labels Term used for Frama labels (q.v) used in UK 1984-85.

Royal Reprint Printing of British 1d stamps in September 1865 requested by young members of the Royal Family for examples of the 1d Black.

RPO Railway Post Office.

Ruled Paper Paper ruled with lines as a guide for writing. Such paper was used for stamps of Mexico and Latvia.

Rural Postmark Undated Postmarks used by rural postmen in Cyprus and Greece.

Rust A brown mould infection that disfigures postage stamps in humid climates and other bad storage conditions.

Sage see Peace & Commerce.

Saggio (Italian) Specimen

St Andrews Cross Label A stamp sized piece of paper bearing diagonally crossed lines in the form of the cross of St Andrew.

Sample Labels or Stamps Security printer products to show to prospective clients.

Sans Serif Name for a form of type which has no cross stroke, or serif, or thickening at the end of each letter.

Savings Stamps Stamps intended to facilitate the savings of sums of money which are too small to be deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank.

Saw Toothed Roulette Also known as "Pérce en Scie" characterised by large cuts made in a diagonal pattern.

Scientific Expeditions Stamps overprinted for the use of expeditions of science and exploration.

Scots Local Cancellations Cancellations in the form of the undated name stamps used at minor post offices in Scotland.

Scouts Post See Boy Scout Posts.

Script Printer's type resembling handwriting.

Script Watermark Watermark consisting of letters in italics.

Sea Floor Bahamas Special postmark applied to mail posted in the bathysphere at the bottom of the sea in Nassau Marine Gardens on 16 August 1939, a souvenir of the Williamson Undersea Expedition.

Seahorses British high value definitives 1913-34.

Sealing Labels Gummed or self adhesive labels used by postal authorities to reseal broken packets.

Seals Gummed labels intended to seal envelopes by affixing them across the flap.

Secret Marks Small marks incorporated in a stamp design to identify particular craftsmanship.

Security Overprint An overprint applied to a stamp to prevent forgery.

Security Paper Paper which has been treated to prevent defacing marks on stamps being removed.

Seebeck Issues Stamps produced by the Hamilton Bank Note Company of New York for some Central American countries.

Segregator

Self Adhesive Labels and Stamps Labels and stamps with a rubber based adhesive that does not require to be moistened.

Self Inking Handstamp

Selvedge Area of unprinted paper surrounding a stamp design.

Semi Official Stamps Stamps used in connection with private postal services but having official sanction.

Semi Postals American term for stamps bearing a charity premium.

Sequence Sorting Machine machine which sorts mail to address in sequence of delivery

Serpentine Roulette A form of separation in which the cuts are in a wavy line pattern.

Se-tenant Pair An unsevered pair of stamps differing from each other in some way, in value or because one is overprinted the other not.

Set A complete collection of single stamps in an issue.

Set Off An additional impression of the whole or part of a stamp design, printed accidentally on the face or back of a stamp.

Sewing Machine Perforation Separation applied by a sewing machine resembling either pin rouletting or rough perforation depending on the condition of the needle.

Shade A variety or degree of colour.

Sheet Stamps are printed on sheets of paper trimmed to convenient size.

Sheet Number A number appearing in the margin of a stamp sheet in order to count and distinguish the sheet individually.

Sheet Watermark Watermark device appearing only once in the printed sheet also known as "All over Watermark" (q.v).

Sheetlet A sheet of stamps containing a much smaller number of stamps than the normal sheet distinguished from Miniature Sheet q.v.

Shift Term used when a colour is applied out of register to the stamp design during printing.

Ship Cancellations Special marks often including the name of the ship used to cancel mail posted on board.

Ship Letter A letter carried by a private vessel instead of a packet letter (q.v). The Post Office agreed to pay the Masters of Private Ships a fee which was an inducement to the efficient handling of letters they carried. This was in addition to the ordinary postage charged and all was paid for by the recipient. A special make was applied to the mail at the port of arrival.(q.v Captain's Gratuity)

Shipping Company Stamps Stamps issued by shipping companies to prepay postage on mail carried by their vessels.

Short Set A set of stamps complete to a specified value only.

Shrinkage Stereotypes of a particular stamp image have often varied in size owing to the shrinkage of the plaster mould from which the stereotypes were made.

Sideways Watermark Watermark device at right angles to the stamp design.

Siege Post Mail services from town under siege in wartime.

Signé Term for a stamp with an expert's signature on the back to prove that it is genuine.

Silk Screen Printing A printing process where the ink is forced through a fine screen onto the paper surface of the stamp below.

Silk Thread Paper Paper with threads of silk in its composition q.v Dickinson Paper.

Silurian Paper Paper with a slight bluish grey tinge and showing threads of different colours on the surface.

Single Line Perforation Perforation applied to a sheet one row at a time from a single row of pins.

Sinking Fund Stamps French stamps with a surcharge for the reduction of the national debt.

Skeleton Handstamp A circular datestamp with the name of the post office around its edge usually an exhibition or some other special event. (q.v Experimental Postmarks)

Sleeper A stamp with a higher value than charged or listed in a catalogue.

Slogan Postmark Postmarks bearing a slogan either as a form of advertising or giving instructions to the public.

Slurred Print Also known as smudged print caused by paper slip at the point of contact with the printing plate.

Smart Stamps

Smiler Sheets Sheet of postage stamps issued se-tenant with labels on which an individual's picture is printed thereon.

Smilers Name given by Royal Mail to stamps attached to a label on which can be printed a photograph supplied by the customers.

Snail Mail Modern term for conventional mail as opposed to Emails.

Soaking Off The removal of surplus paper from postage stamps by immersion in water.

Soldiers' Letters Letters sent from soldiers on active service, often sent free or at a reduced postal rate.

Soldiers' Stamps Stamps issued by many countries to denote the exemption of serviceman's mail from postage.

Somerset House London Headquarters of the Board of the Inland Revenue which was responsible for British stamp production between 1840 and 1930.

Souvenir Packs Packs produced by Royal Mail in conjunction with selected special stamp issues, which in addition to containing stamps, feature an illustrated book with background information.

Souvenir Sheet Small sheets of philatelic interest without postal validity.

Sower (La Semeuse) Longest lived French stamp design first issued in 1903

Space Stamps Stamps commemorating space events.

Space Filler A stamp in poor condition which fills a space in a collection until a better copy is found.

Spandrel The space between the exterior curves of an arch and an enclosing right angle.

Special Delivery Stamps Labels denoting special handling of mail to speed up delivery.

Special Event Postmarks Postmarks used at Exhibitions and other special occasions for which a temporary post office is provided.

Special Fee Stamps Stamps denoting the fees payable in respect of special handling of mail.

Special Flight Stamps Stamps issued for use on mail carried on special flights.

Special Handstamp

Special Handstamp Centre

Specialist An advanced and experienced collector who has made a study of one particular area of philately.

Specimen Under the rules of the UPU all issues of stamps issued by its members must be circulated through its offices to other member countries. Such stamps are usually overprinted or perfined "Specimen" (2) Sample stamps usually overprinted "Specimen" distributed free via the philatelic press or to the trade. Also overprinted officially by postal administrations to prevent re-use.

Speculative Issues Issues of stamps unnecessary for postal requirements.

SPLSM Single Position Letter Sorting Machine or Elsie

Split Stamps Fragments of stamps used postally to represent an appropriate portion of their original value q.v. Bisect. Similarly trisect, quadsect.

Sponsored Booklets Booklets sponsored by commercial firms etc.

Spoon Cancellations Experimental duplex handstamp introduced in England in 1854.

Spray Watermark Name of the watermark of a flower in machine made paper used for British postage stamps between 1867 and 1880.

Squared Circle The first type of combined date and obliterator of stamps used in England & Wales between 1879 and 1914.

SSO Station Sorting Office

Stamp A device for stamping to make a mark on paper. Postage stamps are more correctly referred to as adhesive Postage Stamps or just Adhesives (q.v)

Stamp Card Laminated Card similar to a credit card bearing peelable self adhesive stamps. used in North Korea in 1993.

Stamp Collecting A hobby devoted to collecting and study of philatelic material.

Stamp Currency Unused postage stamps or postage stamp design on card used as coins.

Stamp Duty An inscription usually found on fiscal stamps.

Stamp Packet Exchange Packet used in Philatelic Societies circulated among members to enable them to obtain stamps.

Stamped Paper Paper bearing an impressed fiscal stamp.

Stampless Cover A cover which has passed through the post since the advent of adhesive stamps which does not bear an adhesive or imprinted stamp.

Standing Helvetia 1882-1907 definitive designs of Switzerland.

Steamship Companies Stamps issued by Steamship Companies to prepay postage on letters carried by their mail steamers between certain ports.

Step and Repeat Machine An apparatus by means of which an image on glass is projected as many times as required on to a large glass photographic plate, stepped at exact intervals and repeated along successive rows with photographic and mathematical precision.

Stereotype A solid metallic plate for printing cast from a mould of movable type.

Stitch Watermark A watermark caused by the stitches in the wire or cloth web upon which the paper is made.

Straight Edge The imperforate side of a normally perforated stamp.

Strike Posts Emergency posts set up to maintain communications during strikes.

Strip Three or more stamps joined in a single row.

Strubell Collectors name for Swiss stamps of 1854-62.

Submarine Posts Wartime postal services which carried mail by submarine.

Subject Collecting The collecting of stamps according to designs appearing on them. (q.v Thematic Collecting)

Substituted Transfer In the lithographic process if a transfer to a stone is faulty or wrongly placed on the original transfer can be erased and a fresh transfer laid down on the stone in its place.

Sulphuretted Oxydisation of stamps.

Sunday Delivery Stamps Stamps produced for use on mail intended for delivery on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Surcharge Overprint (q.v) which alters or confirms the value on a stamp.

Surface Coloured Paper Paper with colour printed all over its surface, as opposed to that which has been dyed throughout its manufacture.

Surface Printing Used of printing by the letterpress process.

Susse Perforation A coarse perforation unofficially applied to early French stamps.

Swiftair An express airmail service of Royal Mail.

Sydney Views The first stamp issue of New South Wales 1850

Syncopated Perforation Uneven perforation where the spaces between the perforation holes are uneven because some pins have been removed.

Tab Paper with a special descriptive inscription attached to a stamp but separated by a row of perforation holes.

Tablet French Colonial key type.

Tagged Stamps Stamps overprinted with phosphor bands to assist sorting of mail.

Taille Douce (French) Term used for line engraving printing.

Target Cancellation A numeral obliterator consisting of numerals in concentric circles.

TATOM tracking or sotting of overseas mail

Tax Perçue French for "Charge Paid"

Tax Post A service of Royal Mail introduced in 1984 to expedite mail of the Inland Revenue Offices.

Telegraph Cancel Special obliterations or holes denoting use on a telegraph form.

Telegraph Stamps Stamps with the purpose of the prepayment of telegraph charges.

Telephone Stamps Stamps issued to pay charges for telephone calls.

Testing Labels Dummy stamps used for testing vending machines.

Tête-bêche Pair of stamps one of which has been printed upside down in relation to the other.

Thematic Collecting Stamp collecting according to subject or theme.

Thermography A printing technique for obtaining a pattern in relief by heating a resinous compound adhering to printing ink.

Thickness (of Paper) The paper on which stamps are printed varies in thickness (see Micron).

Thinned A stamp which has lost its original thickness.

Tied Stamps "married" to a cover by the cancellation.

Timbre (French) Stamp

Tin Can Mail Mail conveyed in the sea in tin cans or bottles.

Tombstone Cancel Cancellation in the shape of a tombstone.

Toned Paper Paper which is 'off white' especially with a brownish or buff tinge.

Too Late Mark to explain reason for delay to mail, which has been posted too late to connect with the last despatch on that day.

To Pay Labels Special designation used by the British Post Office for postage due stamps, but also used where Customs and handling fees were to be collected. The use of these labels ceased in Great Britain on 28 January 2000. Amounts payable are known shown by use of a rubber stamp.

Topical Collecting Term used in USA for Thematic Collecting.

TOPS Tri des objets plats – the carriage of flat objects

Toughra The triple sign manual signature or paraph (q.v) of the former Sultan of Turkey

Tourist Publicity Stamps Stamps showing places of interest in the issuing country.

TPO q.v Travelling Post Office

Tracking Labels Labels with serial numbers and barcodes which enable details of any parcel or letters sent, for example, in the United Kingdom by the Royal Mail Special Delivery and Signed For services to be traced subsequent to posting.

Traffic Lights Colour dots printed in the sheet margin denoting each colour printed on a stamp.

Transfer In stamp production by the Perkins die and mill process designs are transferred from an intaglio engraved die to a roller die and from this to the printing plate.

Transfer Roller In intaglio the steel roller which transfers the image from the master die to the plate using the "rocking in" technique.

Transit Postmark A postmark applied to a cover at some point in its transmission between posting and delivery.

Translator

Transorma A machine for sorting incoming mail for street delivery installed and used in the United Kingdom for mail addresses to the Brighton area 1935-1968..

Transposed Subject A rare error in which a subject or image for one printing plate is inserted by mistake into another.

Travelling Post Office (T.P.O) Mobile Post Office usually on a train but sometimes in a bus or van. Usually have special cancellations.

Treasury Competition In 1839 the British Treasury offered prizes of £200 and £100 for the best suggestions "as to the manner in which the projected new postage stamp might best be brought into use" Over 2,500 entries were received and four prizes of £100 were awarded, but none of the suggestions were put into use.

Treasury Essay A proposed stamp design submitted in 1839 to the competition organised by the British Treasury.

Treasury Roulette An experimental form of separation of line engraved postage stamps of Great Britain showing shallow waved edges with internal cuts applied by a revolving wheel with an independent circumference.

Treaty Ports Chinese seaports opened to European trade by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842.

Trials Impressions from a die, punch, plate, stone or other printing surface to test that the design and or colour is correct.

Triangulars Three sided stamps.

Trimmed Term denoting adhesive stamps whose perforations have been clipped owing to faulty guillotining of booklet panes or coils.

TRIPOS Traffic Recording Installations in Parcel Office Systems

Triptych Group of three different stamps printed side by side in the sheet.

Tudor Rose Watermark Watermark similar to an heraldic Tudor Rose.

Tweezers Small metal two pronged instrument used by collectors to pick up stamps without using their finger tips.

Two Tier Post A postal service operating at two distinct levels and offering two separate tariffs.

Type A small piece of wood or metal having a character at the end used in movable printing.

Typeset Stamps Stamps printed from an arrangement of printer's type assembled to make a design.

Typewritten Stamps Stamps which have been produced wholly or partly by typewriting.

Typographical Cancellation Cancellation applied to stamps by letterpress printing.

U Boat Mail Mail carried by German Submarines during both world wars.

Ultra Violet Lamp q.v Quartz Lamp

Ultramer Overprint applied at Lisbon to stamps distributed by the UPU for Portuguese Colonies

Unappropriated Die Die used to produce many British fiscal and revenue stamps.

Uncatalogued Known to exist but not listed in any catalogue

Undenominated Stamps Stamps which do not show a face value.

Underprint An underprint refers to inscriptions on the back of a stamp.

Undivided Back Postcard without the dividing line to separate the message section from the address.

Unemployed Intellectuals Stamps Stamps issued by France between 1935 and 1940 with a premium in aid of the unemployed.

Ungummed Stamps Postage stamps issued without gum on the back.

Unhinged Stamps without any trace of a hinge mark.

Uniform Fourpenny Post From 5 December 1839 to 9 January 1840 letters posted in GB were charged a uniform rate of 4d instead of postage calculated by distance.

Uniform Penny Post Started in GB on 10 January 1840 with a basic rate of 1d per half ounce regardless of distance carried, discontinued in 1918.

Uniform Postage A postal system whereby mail is conveyed at a flat rate irrespective of distance or any other factor apart from weight.

Unissued Stamps Stamps which have been prepared for issue but for some reason have not been issued for postal use.

Universal Colours Colours adopted by members of the UPU for stamps prepaying three classes of postal service: green basic foreign printed matter, red internal postcards, blue internal single rate letters. The use of these colours was ignored by many countries and abandoned by the UPU in 1953

Universal Postal Union (U.P.U.) International organisation with its headquarters in Berne which is responsible for co-ordinating international mail.

Unlisted A stamp which does not appear in a stamp catalogue.

Unmounted Mint Stamps in perfect condition as issued from the Post office.

Unofficial stamps Stamps issued by bus, airline and shipping companies to prepay charges on their parcels and packets.

Unpaid Letter Stamps q.v Postage Due

Unused Stamp Stamp with no postal cancellation but has no gum.

UPU Universal Postal Union (q.v)

Used Abroad Stamp used outside its country of origin.

Used Fiscally Postage stamps inscribed postage & revenue used for the payment of revenue charges.

Used on Cover Stamps postmarked and preserved on the original cover.

Used on Piece A stamp retained on a portion of the original cover.

Used Stamp Stamp that has been used postally and bears at least part of a postmark

US Postmasters' Provisionals Issued in a number of US cities between 1845 when uniform postal rates were established by Congress and 1847 when US postage stamps were first issued.

UV Lamp An ultraviolet lamp used to detect postmarks which have been removed from stamps

V Mail A form of Airgraph (q.v) used by the US Forces during WW2.

Value Tablet The panel on a stamp carrying the declared monetary value.

Variety Any deviation from the normal e.g. errors of colour, design, perforation and watermark.

Varnish Lines Bars of varnish applied across the face of stamps.

VCS Video coding system

Vending Machine Booklet Booklet of stamps prepared to be sold by a vending machine.

Vending Machine Stamps Stamps produced for use in stamp vending machines.

Vertical Pair Imperforate Between A pair of stamps that is fully perforated at the top, sides and bottom but has no perforation between the two.

Victory Stamps Stamps commemorating victory after major wars.

Vignette Term used to describe the central feature of a stamp design: also applied to a pictorial advertising label of no postal validity.

V.R. Victoria Regina - Queen Victoria

V.R.I. (Victoria Regina Imperatrix) Overprint applied from 1900 to stamps issued in Orange free State under British occupation.

Walksort Service offered by Royal Mail where bulk posting are sorted by the sender into the Postman's walks .

Wallpaper Slang for stamps that have little or no value.

WAND Worldwide Advanced Network Distribution

Wants List Collectors list of wanted stamps that are sent to Dealers.

War Stamps Stamps produced in wartime either for propaganda or for use in conquered territories or to raise funds for the prosecution of a war.

War Tax Stamps Stamps issued to raise money in wartime.

Waterlow Paper A thick soft paper supplied by Waterlow & Sons.

Watermark A design, device or pattern usually of wire or metal called Bits (q.v) impressed into paper during manufacture. The purpose is largely for protection against duplication of the paper. The watermarks are numerous in size and design and can be detected by placing in a special watermark detector. (q.v Dandy Roll)

Watermark Bits The designs in metal attached to the frame or dandy roll (q.v) for producing watermarks in the paper.

Watermark Detector Device to aid the identification of watermarks.

Watermark Error Stamps may be found with part or all of the watermark missing or the incorrect watermark for that issue.

Watermark Inverted When a sheet of paper has been fed through the press the right side to the plate, but upside down. It is inverted in relation to the design on the face.

Watermark Reversed Term used when a sheet of paper has been fed through the press the wrong side to the printing surface.

Watermark Sideways The printing of stamps for sale in rolls needs a different arrangement of the printing materials in relation to the paper with the result that the stamps are printed sideways to the paper and the watermark reads vertically instead of horizontally across the stamps.

Way Letters Letters collected by a postman and delivered by him on his round without necessarily going through a Post Office.

Weigh & Pay machine

Wet Printing Printing on paper that has been moistened to make it more resilient and receptive to printer's ink. Stamps from such sheets vary in size from dry printings owing to shrinkage on drying.

White Backs Collector's term for certain British Commonwealth stamps printed on paper coloured yellow or green on the printing surface but left uncoloured on the other side.

Wildings Collectors term for the British definitive series of 1952-67 on account of the Queen's portrait by Dorothy Wilding.

Winchester Paper A type of security paper with a surface tinted grey blue pattern to prevent re-use and forgery.

Window Booklet An early form of retail booklet introduced by Royal Mail in 1987 with the cover having a small window on the upper right side through which the stamps could be seen.

Wing Margin Very wide margin found on stamps printed in pane formation and perforated with only one central vertical line in the inter pane gutters.

Woodblock Stamp printed directly from an engraving on wood.

Working Stone term applied by printers to denote the completed lithographic stone from which the sheets of stamps are printed.

Worn Impression q.v Worn Plate

Worn Plate A printing plate which through constant usage is showing extensive signs of wear,

Wove Paper Paper having in its texture the plain mesh of a fine wire gauze sieve or mould.

Wrapper Any sheet of paper enclosing a letter or newspaper.

Wreck Cover An item of mail salvaged from a shipwreck. q.v Crash Mail

X List List kept at every British Post Office (1886-1915) on which was entered the details of all parcels which were carried by rail, in order that payment may be made to the Railway Company.

Xeroxed Stamps Stamps produced by a photocopying machine.

Xylography The art of engraving on wood.

Yacht Key Type Designs used for stamps of the German Colonies between 1900 and 1914.

Year Book/Pack A book or pack issued by various countries which contain all the commemorative and special issue stamps made in the country during the designated year with background information.

Zemstvo Posts The name given to the services organised by the zemstvos, units of local Government in rural Russia.

Zeppelin Post Airmail services operated in connection with the flights of German Airships.

Z-Grill The rarest of a series of different embossing security devices used in USA between 1867 and 1870.

Zig Zag Roulette Form of separation which produces sharp pointed projections at the edges of stamps.

Zincography Printing from Zinc Plates.

Zip Code Postcode used in USA the name derived from Zone Improvement Plan.