

## Reference Material by Jim Wigmore

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Many years ago when I first started to collect philatelic material of Cyprus, I realised that reference material could be very important in identifying philatelic places and events, in addition to that of the material itself. In those days the Wessex Philatelic Federation of whom my local club (*Bideford*) was an affiliated member, had an excellent library, and an equally good librarian in Oliver Cumming. With a great deal of assistance from Oliver, I went through the library and copied anything that had a reference to Cyprus, or its philatelic material.

Sadly both my local club, and the extensive Wessex Philatelic Library no longer exist. (*Bideford Club is about to be revived, and the Wessex Library is now in the hands of John Perkins*)

Looking through some of the material today which came from such journals as the London Philatelist, Gibbons Stamp Monthly, Stamp Collecting, Stamp Mail, The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps 1861 to 1951 – Great Britain and Empire by Robson Lowe, Stamp Lover, to name but a few, I am constantly amazed by the stories these cuttings tell.

Perhaps the most fascinating of the cuttings are those which refer to displays of Cyprus given to Philatelic Clubs and Societies, including papers presented to the Royal Philatelic Society.

One of these cuttings in particular took my eye, it refers to a meeting of the Manchester Philatelic Society and a display by Mr. A.L. Pemberton. The meeting was on January 11<sup>th</sup> (*but which year?, the fact that it is recorded as the 621<sup>st</sup> meeting of the society may be a clue*) and the President Mr. Goodfellow was in the chair.

*(Thanks to Martin Evans we now know the article was printed on page 47 of the London Philatelist of February 1935)*

The minutes show that Mr. Pemberton (*Snr.*) was unable to attend the meeting, being unable to leave his business in London even for a few hours, and had sent his son to give the display.

The display was commenced by showing a pre-stamp cover of 1786, posted from Cyprus on May 25<sup>th</sup>, had traveled via Marseilles, and had arrived in London on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. This was followed by stamps of Austrian Italy used at Lamaca in 1877.

The principle feature of the collection was the stamps of Great Britain overprinted "CYPRUS" by Messrs De La Rue & Sons and issued in 1880. Reference is made to the current issue of the Philatelic Journal of Great Britain in which Mr Pemberton describes his discovery of an unrecorded error in the overprint on the 1/2d stamps of plate 15, showing a double overprint, one normal and the other slanting. Another stamp shows the sloping overprint and is obviously from the sheet with the double overprint.

With the aid of a tracing of the overprint which consists of 120 subjects, he demonstrated what the sheet with the slanting overprint must have originally looked like, owing to the slant some three or four stamps in the first vertical row must have been entirely without the overprint, whilst those at the top of the seventh row (probably four stamps) must have shown the entire "CYPRUS" twice.

Large blocks of the 1/2d stamp, seventy of plate 12 and seventy two of plate 15 were shown, the former with full marginal inscriptions: a block of 8, also overprinted "SPECIMEN", and used copies with Lamaca(942) and Limassol(975) postmarks.

Of the penny stamps overprinted "CYPRUS" in larger letters, plate 181 was shown with the Egyptian dot cancellation; plate 208 a mint block of 48, a vertical pair from the same plate, the top stamp minus the overprint; plate 218 a vertical strip of 3 with double overprint, and plate 225 which is not listed in the Catalogues

Of the 2 1/2d rosy mauve, plate 14, the large thin "C" variety in block of 4 with control number, and a specimen with Egyptian postmark.

The 4d plate 16 was shown with Constantinople postmark, mint and used copies, and a block of 32 overprinted "SPECIMEN".

The 6d a block of 16 in two horizontal strips of 8 with the division of the panes bearing the inscription between.

The 1/- was also shown both mint and used.

The 1d stamps overprinted in 1881 "HALFPENNY" were shown including a copy of plate 201 with the final "Y" missing, the same error was shown on a strip of 5 from plate 205, and 215 unused, plate 205 was also shown with a triple overprint, and 215 with both double and triple overprints.

Owing to a change in the currency, four plates were overprinted "30 paras", with eleven types in the setting of the overprint, plates 216 and 229 were shown with overprints double and inverted.

The stamps of Cyprus proper were printed by De La Rue & Sons and issued in July 1881, and of five values of piastres, the 2 piastre was shown imperforate, and a very skilful forgery of the 6 piastre with an impressed imitation of watermark.

This issue was extensively overprinted and surcharged and was fully shown and described by Mr Pemberton. His display concluded with the Postage Dues, both with and without the "Postal Surcharge", plus fiscal stamps overprinted "SPECIMEN".

The minutes go on to show that the President proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Pemberton for the instructive display he had provided, and further for making a special journey to Manchester, with the prospect of having to return to London by the midnight train.

What I have failed to tell you so far is that Mr. Pemberton's display was only the second half of the overall syllabus, so called in the minutes.

The Manchester Philatelic Society of the day must have been a very high flying society. I have looked them up in the current issue of the ABPS Handbook, only to find they are not members and barely rate a mention, hence it was impossible to establish a founding date.

I wonder how many speakers today would be prepared to travel such a distance, and to give such a magnificent display for just half an evening. I wonder how many speakers today would have the material to mount such a display, never mind the travel aspects.

Having given displays of Cyprus all over the South West of England, I know all too well the pleasures of the long drive home, from such places as Falmouth, Dorchester, and Minehead, when it is cold dark, and often raining as well.

How times and philately have changed, society meetings are no longer so well reported in the philatelic press, and many societies are now struggling to exist. The only societies doing reasonably well are the specialist societies, so the Cyprus Study Circle should have a good future.

I dare say that many Cyprus Study Circle members have similar cuttings collections, and are all too aware of the value of such material, I even have an excellent cutting about Cyprus that came from "The Lady".

Be well read, and above all keep those cuttings handy, you never know when they will be useful items of reference.