



The Karl Louis “Card Index”

Describing Philatelic rarities calls for more than just quoting catalogue numbers and values. Provenance is a philatelic pedigree of former owners from the inception of philately until the present day. Those collections held in the highest esteem by their contemporaries and containing the great rarities, the modern day “Large Gold” exhibits, can be traced back to the collectors who once owned the particular rarity and the auctions where they were sold and changed hands. Frequently, the further back a philatelic pedigree goes, the more coveted the rarity becomes. Provenance is a quality seal. As in Art, Provenance is an indispensable attribute: in this case, of valuable Great Britain stamps and covers.

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The most comprehensive Provenance files of rare Great Britain has been meticulously maintained by Karl Louis AIEP, FRPSL., Corinphila's Managing Director. Karl started his Great Britain “Card Index” more than 35 years ago. Today it is – to the best of our knowledge – by far the most comprehensive and important census of British Stamps in the philatelic world.

All Provenances given for items offered in the “BESANÇON” Great Britain 1840 – 1910 collection are based on information from the “Karl Louis Card Index” and we will provide as much information on previous owners and sales as possible. We believe that this will benefit both potential buyers and future collectors in the “BESANÇON” series of auctions to be held at Corinphila. For further details, especially of what kind of items can be found in the “Card Index” see: www.corinphila.ch

Pick of the Pack

An article in ‘The Times’ newspaper on 25 October 1847 headed “*Interesting and Useful Improvement in Postage Stamps*” described at length “... the inconvenience of imperforate stamps (and) ... a machine ... as to allow the stamps to be instantly detached from the sheet without the operation of cutting”. In response to this, the first experiments in rouletting stamps were carried out by the Irish inventor, Henry Archer, in 1848.

Some years later examples of Rouletted Stamps found their way into stamp collections. In 1892 Mr. Vernon Roberts, President of the Manchester Philatelic Society, presented to the meeting held on 15 January 1892 a specimen of the Archer Roulette which he stated formerly belonged to Sir Rowland Hill. The Earl of Kingston whose collection was sold in 1896 to Stanley Gibbons, owned seven unused Archer Roulettes. E. D. Bacon mentioned in the June 1924 issue of ‘The British Philatelist’ that he had identified Archer Roulettes from two different plates: Plate 70 and Plate 71 “... they probably came at some time or other from an Official source.” Based on information in the Karl Louis Card Index it can be stated that all recorded Archer Roulettes from plate 70 originate from a single 1d. block of 60 lettered PA-PL / TA-TL. All Archer Roulettes known from Plate 71 originate from a single multiple of 28 stamps lettered OF-RL. Stamps originating from the outer horizontal or vertical rows of both two multiples show separation by scissors on one side, whilst all corner specimens show two sides cut by scissors.



The „BESANÇON“ collection contains a wonderful Archer Roulette mint pair from Plate 70 lettered PI-PJ. The pair clearly shows Archer Roulettes on three sides. The top of the pair is cut by scissors as can be seen on all known letterings from the „P“ row. The „BESANÇON“ pair PI-PJ was first recorded in the famous stamp collection of Henry Philip Manus sold in 1932 by Plumridge & Co. Originally attached on the right to the „BESANÇON“ pair was an Archer Roulette single lettered PK which rested for years in the Colonel Bates collection sold in 1934. The neighbouring stamps to the „BESANÇON“ pair, lettered QI and QJ, are housed in the N.P.M. in London (QI) and until 1951 in the J. B. Seymour collection (QJ).

The „BESANÇON“ pair reflects a fascinating chapter of philatelic history: The first stamp separation experiments. E. D. Bacon's assumption about an „Official source“ the Archer Roulettes may have come from, can also be answered: A pair from the same Plate 70 multiple as the „BESANÇON“ pair, but from the lower row lettered TH-TI, has a small piece of paper attached with a manuscript comment: „These stamps were given by Mr. Archer to Mr. Rowland Hill who gave them to his son Mr. Pearson Hill, who in his turn gave them to Mr. Hastings Whright from whom I bought them. Wm. Peckitt“. So the TH-TI pair clearly indicates that the Archer Roulettes were originally in the hands of Rowland Hill and later found their way on to the philatelic market via his son Pearson Hill. It seems Pearson Hill found the two Archer Roulette multiples from plate 70 and plate 71 in his father's estate and split them up for friends and collectors. What a perfect philatelic provenance!