

Musings and observations from a lifetime in philately

At first sight this stamp looks like a good example of the Ceylon 1861 5d chestnut with a barred cancel SG 22 cat £8.50. Closer inspection will reveal that the stamp has part of the CANCELLED within bars which Gibbons quote at £8,000. The huge difference can be explained thus:



In 1861, Ormond Hill, the nephew of Roland Hill, requested that Perkins Bacon supply him with six copies of each stamp they had printed. The printers took the precaution of obliterating them with a barred oval hand-stamp with the word CANCELLED across the centre. The blocks of six were broken up and distributed among the Hill family. When word of this illegal act became known, the printing contract was taken away from Perkins Bacon and handed over to De La Rue.

Years later, some of these 'Cancelled' stamps came on to the market. Two men recognised their significance; one was Robson Lowe who sold them through his auction, the other was a man named George ... King George V, and he bought one of each for the Royal Philatelic Collection

The example shown here is from position 1 of the block and the one in the Royal Collection is from position 4, immediately below. The illustration of the block is taken from 'Cancelled by Perkins Bacon' by Peter Jaffe. Stamps from positions 3 and 6 have yet to be located.

