

## War Comes to Guernsey

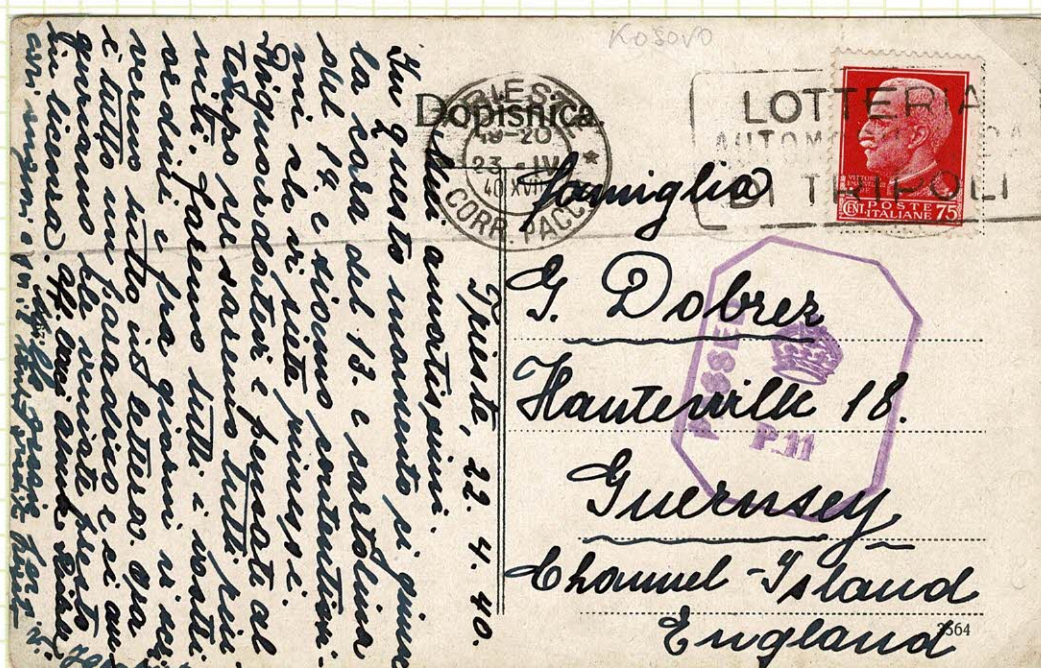
War came to the Channel Islands in June 1940, after the fall of France. Churchill had decided, apparently with great reluctance, that the islands had no strategic value, especially as the Normandy peninsula, the closest part of France to the islands, had been taken by the Germans. Thus far in the war, the islands had been the base for one ineffectual long range bombing raid attacking Turin and Genoa and that was about it. So instead of manning the garrison and fighting, all military personnel were withdrawn in the second half of June; at the same time many islanders, especially children, were evacuated.

The Germans were not told of the demilitarisation and the ports in Guernsey and Jersey were bombed on 28th June as the first step in a planned invasion. Belatedly the British Government announced that the islands were 'open towns'. The invasion, such as it was, amounted to a light reconnaissance plane landing at Guernsey on 30th June and a German pilot reporting back that there was no resistance. More Luftwaffe arrived later that day and the first troops came by ship, but not until 14th July. Guernsey and the other Channel Islands were occupied and would remain so until the end of the war. They were the only part of the British Isles that were taken by the Germans. The contemporary photo below shows some of the occupying troops the day that they landed in Guernsey.



### Guernsey (Not Yet) At War

The postcard below was posted in Trieste, Italy in April 1940, near the end of what was later called the phoney war. Although Italy was an ally of Germany, with whom Britain was at war at the time, when the card was posted Mussolini had so far remained neutral. That changed when Germany invaded France in May 1940 and he supported his ally by declaring war on Britain and its allies on 10 June 1940, when the defeat of France was all but complete (the Dunkirk evacuation ended on 4 June and the formal French surrender took place on 22 June). So in April 1940 Italy was ostensibly a neutral, which is why the card was delivered through the British postal system. Wartime conditions prevailed and the card carries a British censor stamp. The picture on the front is of Mitrovica, a town in Kosovo, then part of Yugoslavia. At the time that the card was sent the area was at peace, later shattered by the German invasion which started in April 1941.



75c Red on Postcard Trieste to Guernsey  
Trieste Double Ring and Lottery 23 Apr 1940 cancellation and  
British censor cachet on rear

## War Comes to Guernsey

One of the first philatelic casualties of war is usually the inability to deliver letters. The back of the envelope below carries the embossed arms of Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton, part of a group of companies that eventually became known collectively as Bass Brewery. One of their pubs was Warren's Hotel in Southampton, from where the letter may have been sent. As it was to a wine merchant in Guernsey, it may have been correspondence regarding supplies. Whatever the contents, the letter was not delivered. It carries a 29th June postmark, the day before the German occupation began and after the suspension of postal services to the Channel Islands, and is marked 'Undelivered for Reasons Stated - Return to Sender' and 'Service Suspended'; it had been caught up by events and could not be delivered to Guernsey.



2½d Blue on Envelope Southampton to Guernsey  
Southampton Single Ring 29 Jun 1940 cancellation  
and two different return handstamps on front



Enlarged copy of rear embossing

## **Guernsey Philately Under Occupation**

German policy was to treat the islands lightly as Hitler expected Great Britain to fall soon. Although that never happened, the islanders retained a degree of autonomy, albeit under German rule. Postal services continued and over time, four types of service came into being. These were:

### **Local Mail**

Channel Island inhabitants were allowed to use the normal postal system to send letters, but only within the islands. This service could still use existing stamp stocks with the King's head on them - extraordinary, considering that the King was still the leader of the nation at war with Germany. However, further supplies of English stamps could not be obtained during the Occupation period and as will be discussed later, first bisect stamps and then locally printed stamps were used instead.

### **Red Cross Mail**

The only way Islanders could send or receive messages to or from their relatives in England or other unoccupied countries was through the International Red Cross. using special forms produced by the German Red Cross for outward mail and the British Red Cross for inward mail. These forms carried reply sections.

### **Internee Mail**

During late 1942 and 1943, Islanders of British nationality were deported from the Channel Islands to Internment camps in Germany. These Internees could write to the Channel Islands or to their relatives in England on special Internee cards or letter sheets; mail was also sent from the Channel Islands and England to these camps. I have interpreted this term also to include mail from PoWs and those interned in GB.

### **German Feldpost**

Mail to and from the German troops on the Islands was sent through the German Feldpost system, with a Feldpost Office on Guernsey and another one on Jersey. German soldiers were allowed to send mail free of charge. Islanders could also use this service to write to friends in occupied territories such as France. For this service, only German stamps could be used. These were cancelled with a standard German Feldpost postmark. Channel Islands stamps were not valid for this service.

Examples of all of these types of mail are given on later sheets.

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (1)

Local mail went through the post office, now under German control. The local rate was 1d and the post office's principal stocks were of the 1940 Postal Centenary issue.



1d Red On Envelope Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Machine 16 Oct 1940 cancellation on front



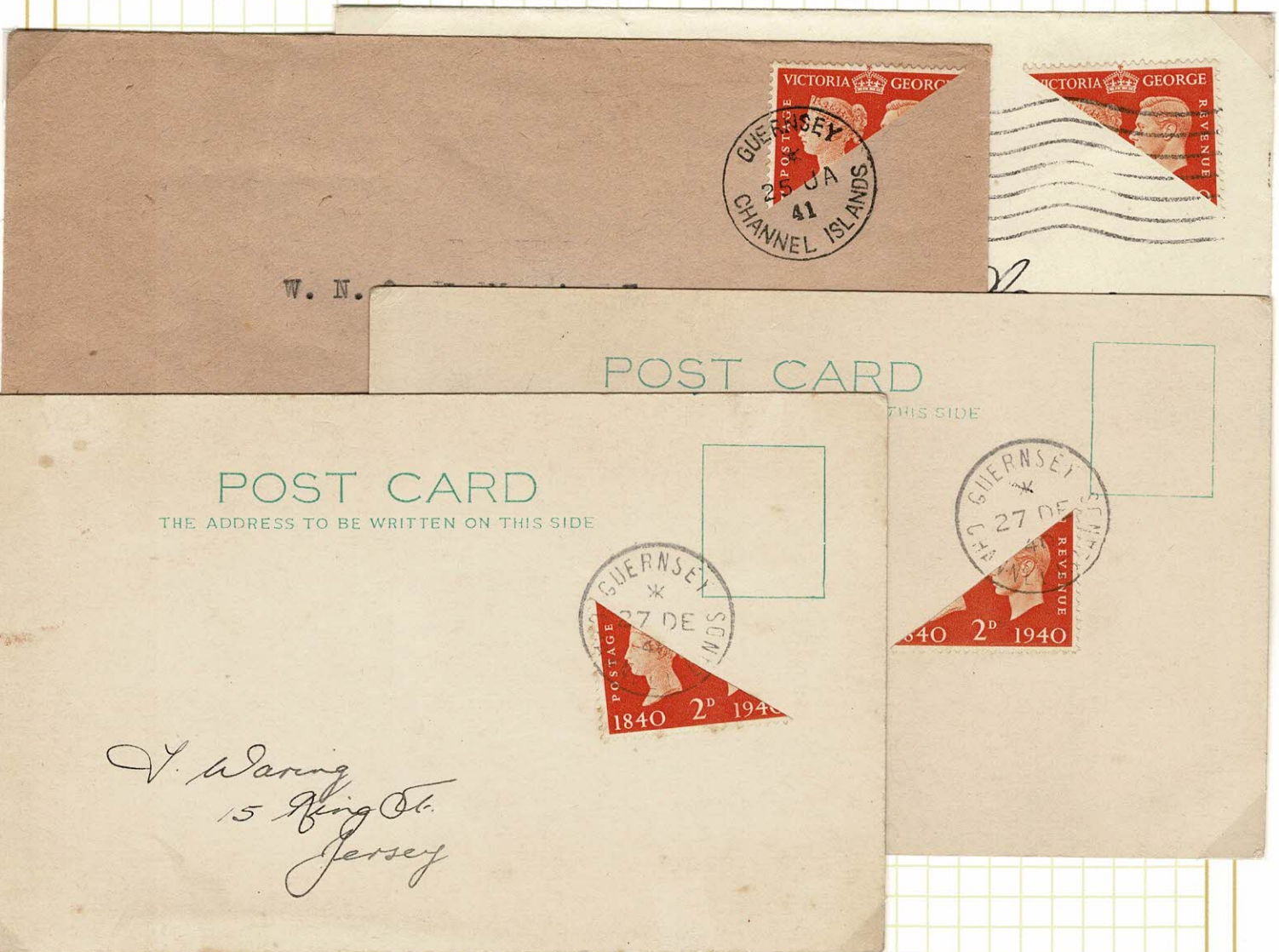
This envelope was posted much later in the occupation, in May 1942, by which time stocks of GB stamps had been long exhausted. It may have been sent by a philatelist on Sark, using mint KEVIII stamps from his collection.

KEVIII 1/2d Green and 1d Red On Envelope Sark to Guernsey  
Sark Double Ring 23 May 1942 cancellations on front

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (2)

Supplies of GB stamps were limited and, not surprisingly, the Germans would not allow any new stocks to be sent over. In late 1940 supplies were getting low and the postal authorities decided to allow 2d stamps to be bisected and the two halves each used as a 1d stamp. The authority to do this was issued on 24 December 1940 and the first day of issue of bisected stamps was 27 December.

Most bisects obtained through the Post Office were of the 2d Postal Centenary issue. Although there were no precise rules about the bisecting, more seem to have been top left to bottom right, although the reverse also occurs. The small montage below shows examples of all four bisects; the bottom two are first day covers.



### Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (3)

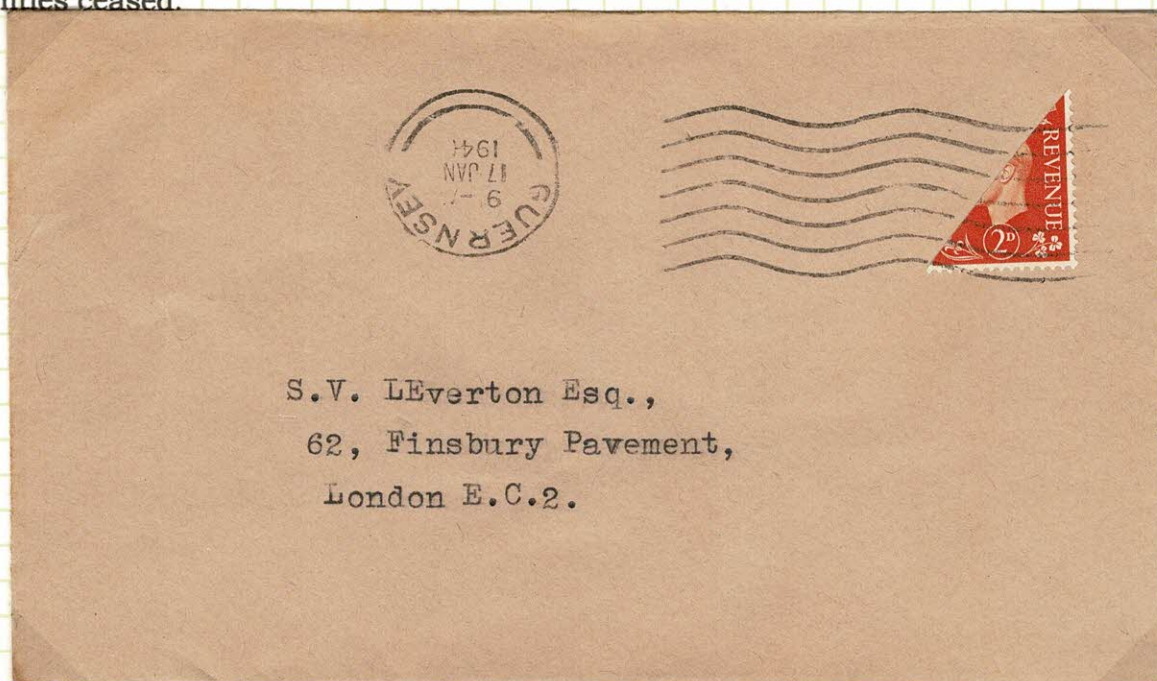
The slip below was in one of the envelopes featured in the montage on the previous sheet. It is an extract from the official Gazette and makes clear that anyone could bisect a stamp; apart from obtaining such stamps from the Post Office, home bisects would be allowed, providing that they followed the rules set out in the notice, in particular that the bisect was diagonal.

From La Gazette Officielle, Guernsey, 24th December 1940.

The Post Office advises that further supplies of 1d. Postage Stamps are not at present available and that, until further notice, prepayment of penny postage (for printed papers, etc.) can be effected by using one half of a 2d. stamp, provided that the division is made by cutting the stamp diagonally.

It is emphasised that the bisection of stamps should be done carefully, and that correspondence bearing half stamps not cut in the manner indicated will be liable to surcharge.

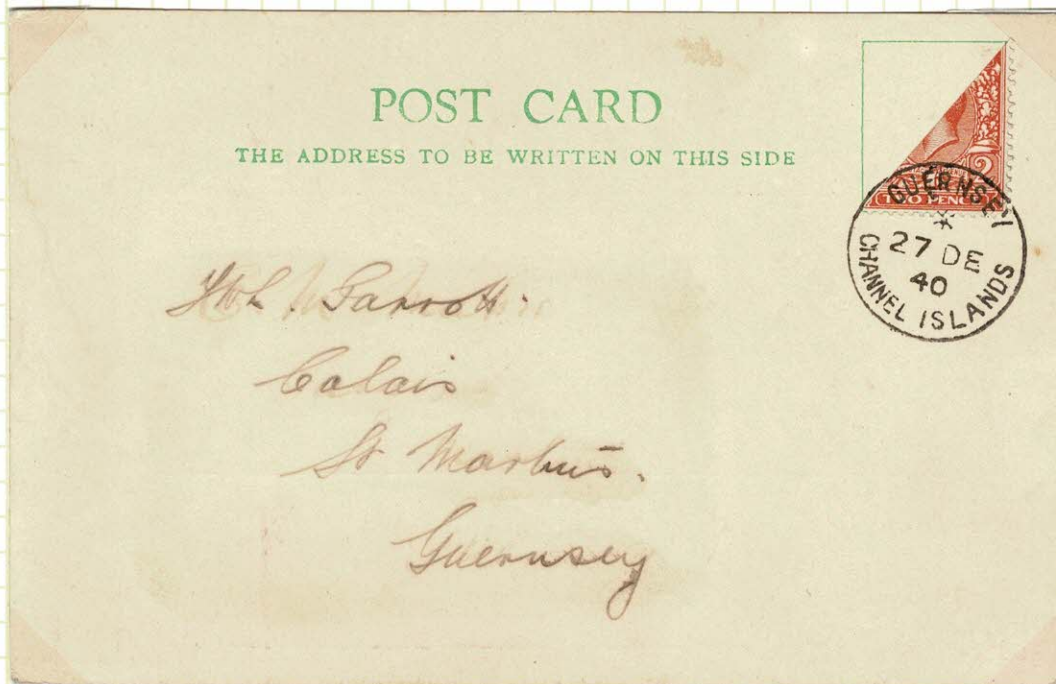
The window envelope below carries a Guernsey machine cancellation, upside down, dated 17 Jan 1941. It was probably confected by someone with access to a cancellation machine, as it is addressed to London but carries no censor marks; indeed it would not have been allowed through the mail as the only post to and from GB during the occupation was on Red Cross forms. Either this was done illicitly and then held back until the war was over, or it was posted and was retained by the Post Office, again until hostilities ceased.



Bisected GVI 2d Orange on envelope Guernsey to London  
Guernsey Inverted Machine 17 Jan 1941 cancellation on front

#### Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (4)

The rules on bisecting were not limited to the Postal Centenary issue and other bisects can be found, including some with GV stamps. In line with the Gazette extract on the previous sheet, these would not have been issued by the Post Office, but presumably philatelists, spotting a post war opportunity, would have dug out mint stamps from the collections (or perhaps used stamps with the cancellation allowing for a 'mint' bisect). The two items below are bisects of GV and GVI stamps respectively. The first, a stamp from the 1924-26 issue with a first day cancellation, would clearly not have been issued in 1940 by the Post Office.



Bisected GV 2d Orange (1924-26) on card Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Single Ring 27 Dec 1940 cancellation on front



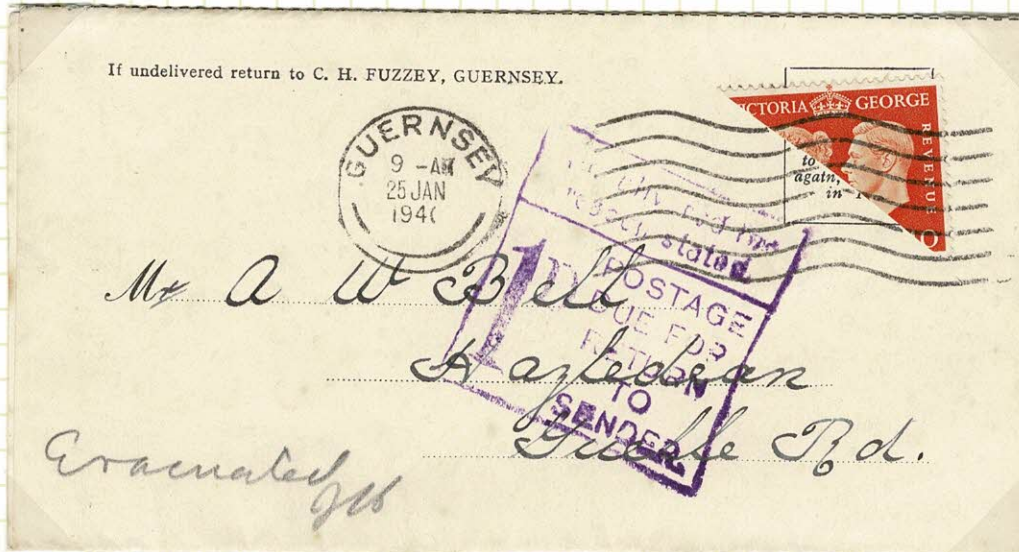
Bisected GV 2d Orange (1934-36) on window envelope Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Single Ring 31 Dec 1940 cancellation on front



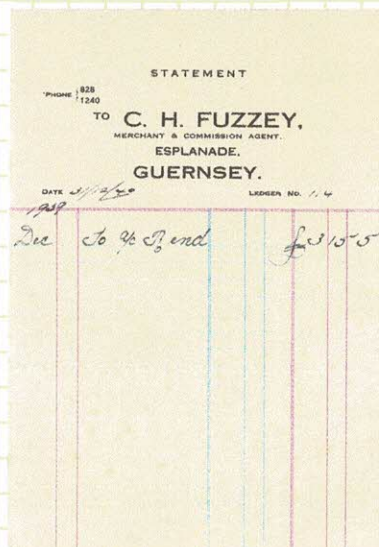
## War Comes to Guernsey - Evacuation

Once the Germans had taken France and Churchill had decided not to defend the channel islands, evacuation began in earnest. In the ten days from the fall of France until the German 'invasion' on 30th June, some 17,000 people were evacuated from Guernsey to mainland GB. Initially the evacuation was for women and children and men of military age - not being formally part of the UK, the National Service Act of 3 September 1939, enabling conscription, did not apply in the channel islands, but many men volunteered and were amongst the first to leave. Towards the end of the evacuation, passage was allowed to all. Many boats were used, ferries, freighters and other craft; on 21 June, for example, 25 ships took people from Guernsey. Given the small size of the harbour at St Peter Port, the sheer scale must have made logistics very difficult.

Evacuation led eventually to the exchange of Red Cross forms, discussed later. It also led to returned mail. For example, the envelope below opens out into a statement showing £3/15/5d owing, but presumably not collected as the front is endorsed 'Evacuated' and carries a handstamp denoting another 1d to pay to return to sender.



2d Bisect on Entire Guernsey Local Post  
 Guernsey Machine 25 Jan 1941 cancellation and  
 'Undelivered For/Reason Stated/1d/Postage/Due For/Return To/Sender' handstamp on  
 front



Reduced copy of statement

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (5)

Inevitably stocks of existing stamps were run down and new stamps were needed. Obviously a local printing of British stamps would be unthinkable to the Germans. Using German stamps might have been an option, but these would have needed a currency overprint as most locals used sterling as their currency, although there was a Reichsmark scrip issue to soldiers. Instead the Guernsey Post Office, and its sister office in Jersey, decided to produce their own stamps.

Guernsey was first to issue locally printed stamps, between February and April 1941; each value was first issued on a different date in that period. Jersey followed suit in 1942, with the same design but carrying the word Jersey instead of Guernsey.

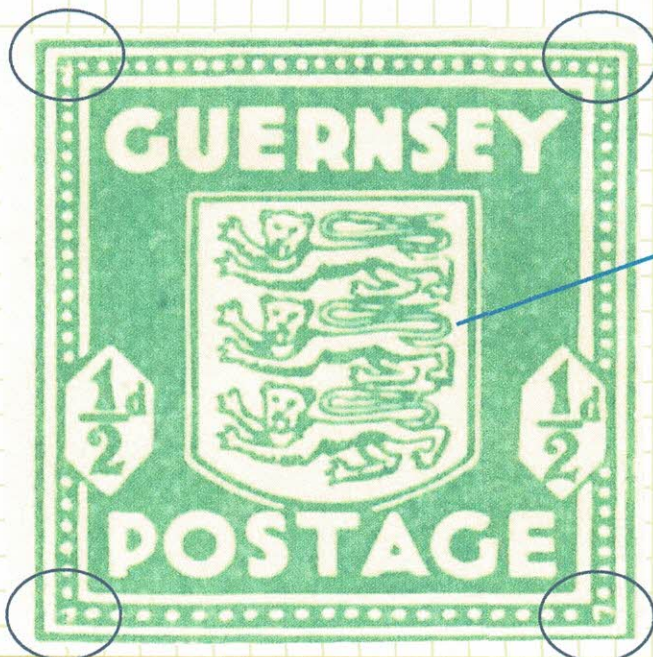


1/2d Light Green

1d Scarlet

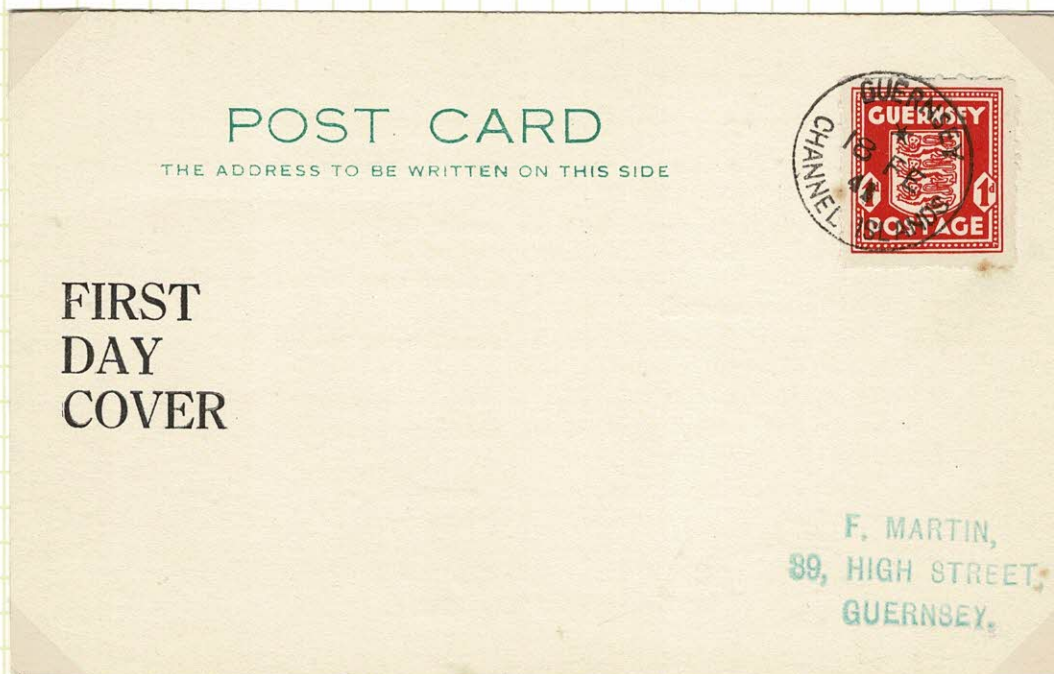
2 1/2d Ultramarine

It is claimed that there was a quiet bit of resistance in the design, which was by a renowned local artist, Edmund Blampied. First he chose as the basic theme the three lions, which the Germans were told, quite truthfully, was the standard of Normandy; but it was also on the Royal Standard. Secondly, he managed to incorporate little Vs on the corners of the dotted line outline - these show well in the scanned version of the 1/2d Green below.



## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (6)

As the three locally printed stamps were all issued on different days, there are three first day covers. As the local postage rate at the time was 1d and as stocks of bisected stamps were running out, it is not surprising that the 1d Scarlet was the first stamp issued, on 18th February 1941. The card below is a first day item.



1d Scarlet on card, Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Single Ring 18 Feb 1941 cancellation on front

On the rear is a reproduction of an announcement in the local newspaper regarding the new stamps. As the reproduction is dated the same as the cancellation, this was probably something produced by the newspaper for philatelists. The subheadline, talking of Guernsey's first venture into philately, is correct; up until this time all stamps issued by the Post Office had been GB ones; this was the first local printing.

### **PENNY POSTAGE STAMPS.**

#### **GUERNSEY'S FIRST VENTURE IN MAIL PHILATELY.**

An official notice appearing in our columns, informs readers that:

**Penny postage stamps will be available for purchase at the Head Post Office, Smith Street, and at all Sub-Offices in the Bailiwick, where Money Order or Savings Bank business is normally transacted.**

**This order came into force as from 9 a.m. to-day, February 18th, 1941.**

The present arrangement whereby 2d. stamps cut diagonally, provides for penny postage, will cease on Saturday, the 22nd instant.

This notice has the official sanction of the German Authorities and is signed by the Acting Head Postmaster, Mr. H. C. Chapell.

(Reproduced from the "Evening Press," Guernsey, of  
**February 18th, 1941).**

### Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (8)

Although the GB postal authorities had raised the standard letter rate to 2½d on 1st May 1940, that is before the occupation, a rate of 1d applied to local mail on the islands, as shown on the previous sheets. As the local authorities saw tax revenues declining and costs rising as a result of the war, funds were sought from whatever sources were available, and the local rate was increased to 2½d later in 1941.



½d Green and Two 1d Red on envelope, Sark to Guernsey  
Sark Double Ring 11 Apr 1942 cancellations on front

The new postal rate saw many envelopes with combinations.



1½d GB Brown and 1d Red on envelope, Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Machine 27 Oct 1941 cancellation on front

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (10)

Under old and new postal rates, understamped mail was treated as before the war. In both the examples below, the handstamps carry the '324' mark which was the number assigned to the Guernsey Post Office by the British postal authorities. The envelope below should have carried 2½d in postage, not 2d.



Two 1d Red on envelope, Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Machine 6 Nov 1941 cancellation on front together with old fashioned 'Liable to Letter Rate 324' and more modern 'Return to Sender' handstamps

The postcard below carries a first day postmark for the ½ Green of 7 April 1941, but in his or her enthusiasm the writer forgot to put the correct postage of 1d on the card



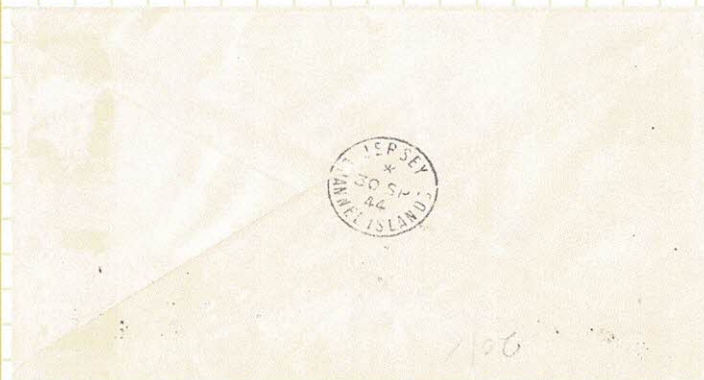
½d Green on card, Guernsey Local Post  
Guernsey Single Ring 7 Apr 1941 cancellation and '1d 324' to pay handstamp on front

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Local Mail (11)

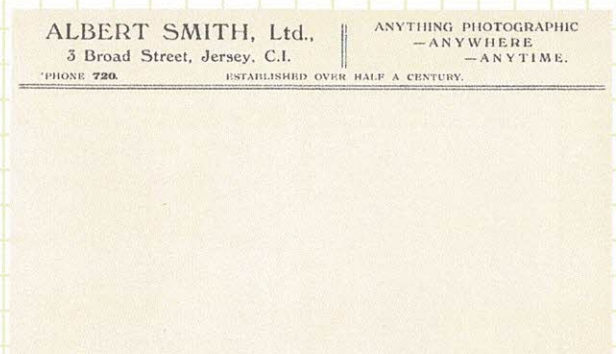
The last item below is an obvious postal concoction, as it shows both Guernsey and Jersey locally printed stamps (Jersey had issued a subsequent series showing local scenes, but these are not included here). The envelope has a Jersey registration label, but Guernsey cancellations on the front and a Jersey cancellation, on the same day, on the rear. The Guernsey local printings carried a range of shades, due to wartime restrictions on things such as ink supplies, and these can clearly be seen when comparing the two and the two 1d Reds on the envelope. Inside the envelope was a blank postcard issued by a local photographer, who may have been part of the group promoting these concoction covers.



Various Guernsey and Jersey stamps on envelope, Guernsey to Jersey  
 Guernsey Single Ring 30 Sep 1944 cancellation on front.  
 Jersey Single Ring 30 Sep 1944 handstamp on rear




Reduced copy of rear



Reduced copy of card insert

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Red Cross Mail (1)

The only way the channel islanders could send or receive mail to GB was through the Red Cross. Mail from Guernsey was sent using the German Red Cross form, which like the British one had a space on the rear for a reply. The form below was sent in February 1942 by a lady to her sister, whose reply (next sheet) implies that they are twins. The form on front and rear carries various Red Cross and censor handstamps.

BLT  R.C.B. GUERNSEY

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz  
Präsidium / Auslandsdienst  
Berlin SW 61, Blücherplatz 2

ANTRAG  
an die Agence Centrale des Prisonniers de Guerre, Conf  
— Internationales Komitee vom Roten Kreuz  
auf Nachrichtenvermittlung

REQUÊTE  
de la Croix-Rouge Allemande, Présidence, Service Etranger  
à l'Agence Centrale des Prisonniers de Guerre, Genève  
— Comité International de la Croix-Rouge —  
concernant la correspondance

1. Absender Miss Nancy Rawlinson,  
Expéditeur Bon Air, St. Jacques, GUERNSEY, C.I.  
bittet, an  
prie de bien vouloir faire parvenir à  
Sister.

2. Empfänger Miss Barbara Rawlinson,  
Destinataire 49 Greenwood Rd., CLARKSTON,  
GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.

folgendes zu übermitteln / ce qui suit :  
(Höchstzahl 25 Worte !)  
(25 mots au plus !)




Darling,

Well. Cheerful. Sense of humour  
great asset. Awful Cissy, bedsocks, mittens,  
Hot Water Bottle, biggest friends. Only  
need parrot now. Still smiling. 8 JUN 1944

(Datum / Date) 26-2-44. Fondest love.  
(Unterschrift / Signature)

3. Empfänger antwortet umseitig  
Destinataire répond au verso

*Nancy Rawlinson*



## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Red Cross Mail (2)

The copy of the rear of the Red Cross form on the previous sheet shows the reply, and also the date that the form arrived back in Guernsey; 21 February 1945, just under a year since originally sent. This delay was much longer than earlier in the war, when the roundtrip for such forms was around six months - the attrition of war obviously was affecting what would be thought of as non-essential items. By the time of her reply, the writer's sister obviously thought hostilities would be soon over.

4. Antwort des Empfängers :  
Réponse du destinataire :

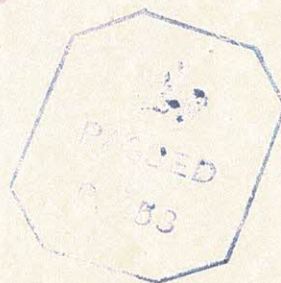
(Höchstzahl 25 Worte !)  
(25 mots au plus !)

Darling Jane. Bet coming on  
week's holiday soon. Hope you and  
I have joint twenty-first celebrations  
some time this year. Love and  
kisses. Bob.

(Datum / Date)



Barbara Tawkinson (Unterschrift)  
(Signature)



21.2.45

21. FÉV. 1945



## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Internment Mail (1)


The two main types of civilians in Guernsey at the start of the occupation were those born on the islands and those born in Great Britain. At first the two were treated in the same way, but vents in Iran in 1941 changed things.

Iran had started the war as neutral, with leanings towards Germany, but the rapid German advances into Russia in 1941 led to concerns amongst the Allies that Germany might capture Russian territory up to the Iranian border, then move into Iran proper and from there try to cut important supply routes and deny the Allies access to Iranian oil. In consequence in the summer of 1941 Britain and Russia occupied south and north Iran respectively. In September 1941, the German legation and women and children from the German community in Iran were permitted to travel to Europe, but 800 German men of fighting age (18-45) were rounded up and interned, mainly in India.

Hitler was livid at this internment and demanded retaliatory action. The High Command came up with the idea of interning British citizens resident in the Channel Islands. Initially the order was not carried out, as there were only about 2,000 men available and Hitler wanted a 10 to 1 ratio in relation to the 800 German internees. Eventually the order was reissued in September 1942 and applied to over 8,300 men, women and children who were deported from the islands to camps in Germany.

The card below was sent from Ilag VII. Ilag is an abbreviation of Internierungslager, meaning internment camp. Such camps were established by the German Army to hold Allied civilians, caught in areas that had been were occupied. The postcard is from one of the internees to a friend in Guernsey. It was sent from Ilag VII at Laufen, the camp to where most of the male internees were sent. It carries a German censor's handstamp at the camp, marked 'geprüft', which means 'checked'.

**Interniertenpost**  
**Postkarte**



MR W. WELLINGTON

Gebührenfrei!

<b>Absender:</b>	Empfangsort: <u>VALE</u>
Vor- und Zuname: <u>AE BUDDLE</u>	Strasse: <u>LA MAISONNETTE</u>
Interniertennummer: <u>1207</u>	Land: <u>GUERNSEY</u>
Lager-Bezeichnung: <u>LAUFEN (0331)</u>	Landesteil (Provinz usw.): <u>KANAL-INSERN</u>
Ilag VII	
Deutschland (Allemagne)	

## Life Under Occupation - Internment

Jersey, den 18. Sept. 1942

On account of the Notice of the Feldkommandantur 515 dated Sept. 15th, 1942 you have to report yourself / yourselves at 12 noon on Sept. 23rd. 42 in Gaumont Cinema

You have to take with you this order together with papers proving your identity.

It is necessary that you fit yourself / yourselves out with warm clothes, solid boots, some provisions, meal-dishes, drinking-bowl, and, if possible, a blanket. Your luggage must not be heavier than you can carry and must bear a label with your full address.

It is left to you to get, for each person, a trunk ready packed with clothes and locked for shipment to you. You must mark your full address on each trunk.

It is also left to you to take with you an amount of money up to Reichsmarks 10.- in German notes of Reichskreditkassen for each person.

Should you fail to obey this order, you must expect to be punished by a martial court.

Kommandant:

Knackfuss

Oberst.

Later in 1942, internment proper began. Those chosen for internment were sent documents requiring them to make ready to be taken off the island; the very fragile paper opposite was sent to Thomas Bichard; it was dated 18th September 1943 and gave him five days to pack up and get ready.

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Feldkommandantur 515 Jersey, den 18. Sept. 1942

Thomas Bichard 31 a b a r r.  
6a, Pavilion Street,  
St. Peter - Port.

Sie haben sich auf Grund der Bekanntmachung der Feldkommandantur 515 vom 15.9.1942 an zu melden. Das in Gaumont Cinema einzufließen.

Es ist mitzunehmen die vorliegende Aufforderung nebst persönlichen Ausweispapieren.

Die Mitnahme warmer Kleidung, fester Stiefel, etwas Nahrung, Messer, Trinkbecher und möglichst einer Decke ist notwendig. Der Gepäcksack darf nicht schwerer sein als sie es tragen können und ist mit einem Etikett mit Ihrer Namensaufschrift zu versehen.

Ferner wird anbelegestellt, pro Person einen verschlossenen Koffer mit Kleidungsstücken zur Beachung bereitzustellen. Auf dem Koffer ist genaue Anschrift anzubringen.

Es wird ferner freigestellt, Geld im Betrage bis zu RM 10.- in Reichskreditkassenscheinen pro Person mitzunehmen.

Falls in dieser Aufforderung nicht nachkommen, haben die Verursachenden strafrechtliche Verantwortung zu erwarten.

On account of the Notice of the Feldkommandantur 515 dated Sept. 15th, 1942 you have to report yourself / yourselves at 12 noon on Sept. 23rd. 42 in Gaumont Cinema.

You have to take with you this order together with papers proving your identity.

It is necessary that you fit yourself / yourselves out with warm clothes, solid boots, some provisions, meal-dishes, drinking-bowl, and, if possible, a blanket. Your luggage must not be heavier than you can carry and must bear a label with your full address.

It is left to you to get, for each person, a trunk ready packed with clothes and locked for shipment to you. You must mark your full address on each trunk.

It is also left to you to take with you an amount of money up to Reichsmarks 10.- in German notes of Reichskreditkassen for each person.

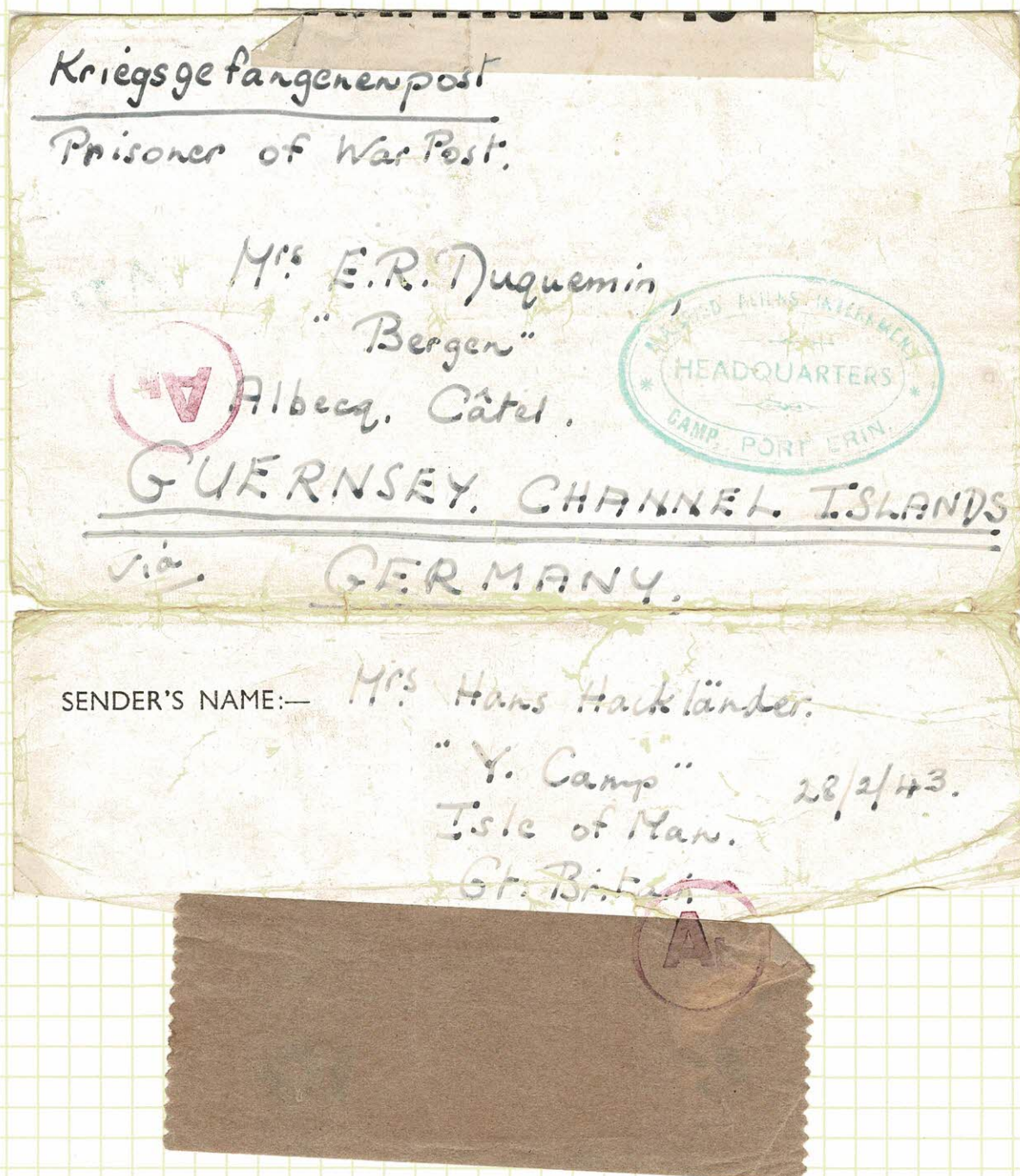
Should you fail to obey this order, you must expect to be punished by a martial court.

Der Feldkommandant:  
ges. Knackfuss  
Oberst.

The full document is in both English and German and was issued by the local Field Commander, a Colonel

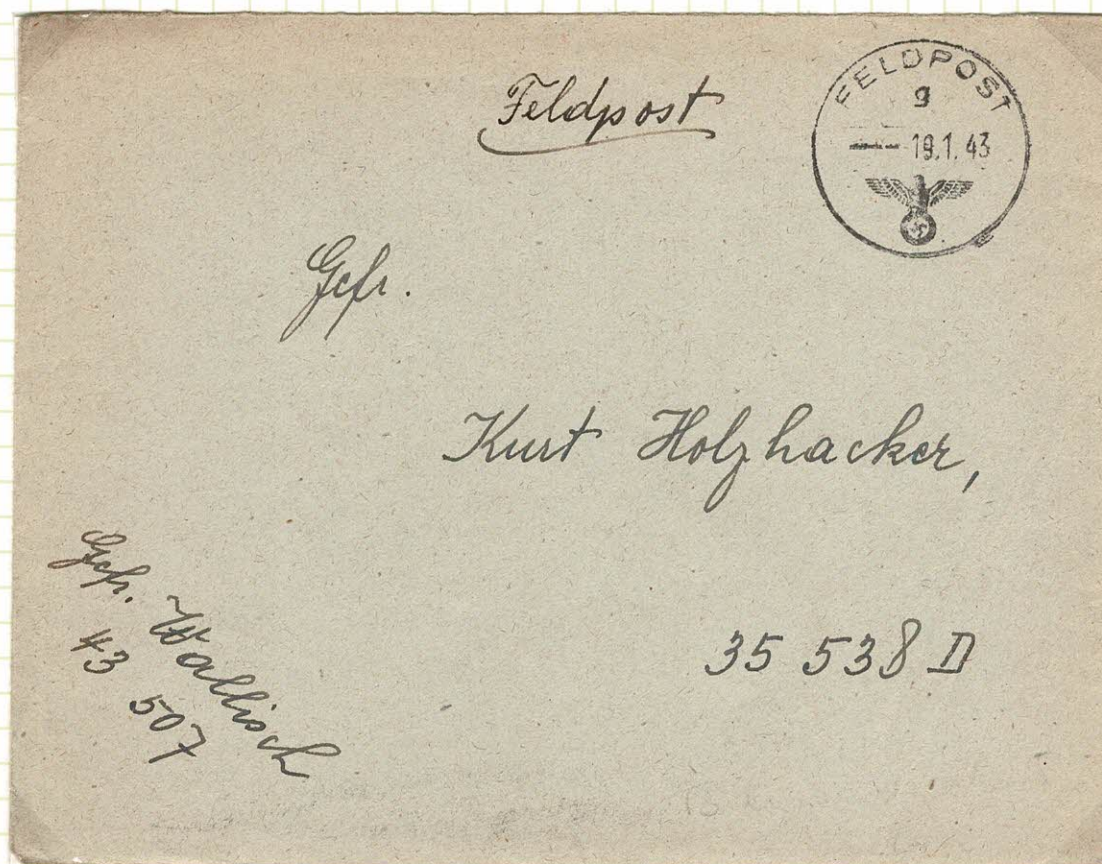
### Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Internment Mail (3)

The last item is a different sort of internment; it has been sent by the wife of Herr Hans Hacklander, presumably a German. Mrs Hacklander was interned in Camp Y on the Isle of Man, which was a camp for internees who were married aliens. What is interesting is that the letter is written in English and was sent to Mrs Hacklander's mother, who seems to have been a Guernsey native. Certainly from the letter itself it is obvious that the writer's first language is English, so it seems that Mrs Hacklander married a German and although a channel islander, still got interned. That may have been by choice as her husband, who was obviously also interned on the Isle of Man, is mentioned in the context of them both working their allotment on the island. The letter carries a good cachet of the Port Erin internment camp and British and German censor marks, the latter a clear 'Ab' both on the front and back.



### Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - Feldpost

German troops stationed on the channel islands were allowed free post back to Germany and on to other units of the armed forces, wherever they were positioned. The cover below was sent from Guernsey in January 1943. It is marked on the front 43507, which was a German Feldpost on Gurnsey. It was sent to an altogether different location, Feldpost 35358D, which was located on the Russian front. At the time the letter was sent, German troops in Russia would be enduring a harsh winter and an even harsher time as the Russians overwhelmed the encircled defenders of Stalingrad.



Feldpost Letter Guernsey to Russian Front  
Feldpost 19 Jan 1943 cancellation on front

## Guernsey Philately Under Occupation - What Post?

The card below is an obvious philatelic concoction. It carries both Guernsey and Jersey locally printed stamps, with separate local cancellations two weeks apart, and also a German stamp, cancelled probably illicitly with a Guernsey handstamp. The envelope is marked 'Mit Luftpost', i.e. via airmail, but it would not have been sent on that routing without German cancellations. In all probability the card was stamped locally and then later hand delivered or just retained by the sender.



1/2d Green and Two 1d Red and German 6pf on card, ostensibly Guernsey to Hamburg  
Guernsey Single Ring 18 Nov 1941 and Jersey 2 Dec 1941 cancellations on front. Marked  
for airmail.

## **The End of Occupation (1)**

Hitler ordered massive defence installations in Guernsey and Jersey, part of his 'Atlantic Wall'. They were not needed as the Allies still saw no strategic value to the islands, but they consumed vast amounts of material that would have been better deployed elsewhere.

There was hard fighting in Normandy on and after D Day on 6 June 1944. Eventually the peninsula was fully taken with the closing of the Falaise Pocket in August 1944. From that point the German garrison on the Channel Islands was completely cut off; the nearby coastline was in Allied hands and the Allies controlled both sea lanes and the skies above. Supplies could not get through in any volume - a small number of plane landings took place but what they carried was trivial compared to what was needed.

The complete encirclement of the islands would have made an invasion of the islands feasible, and a plan, Operation Constellation, had been drawn up by Mountbatten. In the event, no attempt was made, again because of the lack of strategic value and the need to press on with the main attack on northern France and Germany. The German garrison was left on its own by its High Command but could do little to harass the Normandy coastline - all the efforts had gone into defences, not into any attack capability. Nevertheless one German artillery battery in Alderney, Blücher, did open fire on German troops on the west side of the Normandy peninsula, but to little effect.

As the islands were now cut off from supplies from the mainland, they endured a particularly hard winter in 1944/5, with close to starvation conditions.

In the spring of 1945 it was obvious that the Allies would be victorious and the islands started to anticipate life free from occupation. That came with the final surrender of Germany, which took place on 8th May 1945.

'Operation Nest Egg', the liberation of the Channel Islands, was undertaken by task Force 135, which trained for many months - why so much training, when little or no defence from the Germans was expected, is unclear. On 8 May the destroyer HMS Bulldog with HMS Beagle as an escort left Plymouth to rendezvous with the German four miles off Guernsey. The German commander, Vice Admiral Huffmeier, argued for an armistice but had to settle for a full surrender. Later that day HMS Bulldog arrived in Guernsey and disembarked the advance guard of Task Force 135. HMS Beagle split off and went on to Jersey to effect the surrender of the German garrison there.

The Guernsey Evening Press newspaper on 8th May talked of the formal surrender and made clear that negotiations had already taken place with the German authorities regarding the handover of power. The Star morning newspaper the next day noted that an advance party of about 25 troops had already landed and that more would follow, with assurances that foodstuffs would be provided within two weeks.

## The End of Occupation (5)

Local postal services had run throughout the war and they continued pretty seamlessly afterwards. Initially the usual military arrangements were made for forces mail, as in the two examples below, although they were probably unnecessary.

The first item below is a standard unused Official Paid postcard, for use by troops or islanders.

REOCCUPATION OF CHANNEL ISLANDS

This card is liable to CENSORSHIP and may be sent only to an address in the BRITISH EMPIRE or to a member of H.M. FORCES.

The address only should be written on this side.

WRITE ADDRESS in BLOCK LETTERS and if possible in ink.

TO:—

.....

.....

..... (Post Town)

..... (County)

OFFICIAL PAID

Full POSTAL ADDRESS of SENDER (in BLOCK LETTERS):

The message below must refer to personal and family matters only.

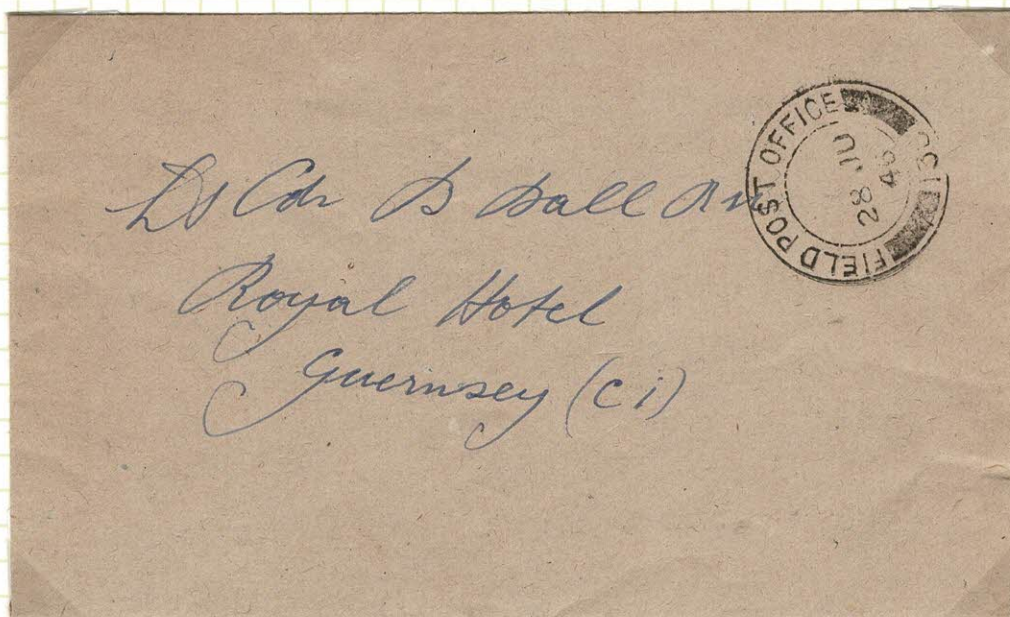
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

© 1945 W.L. 5825-PA-300 500w 414 G.S.M. Gp. 338

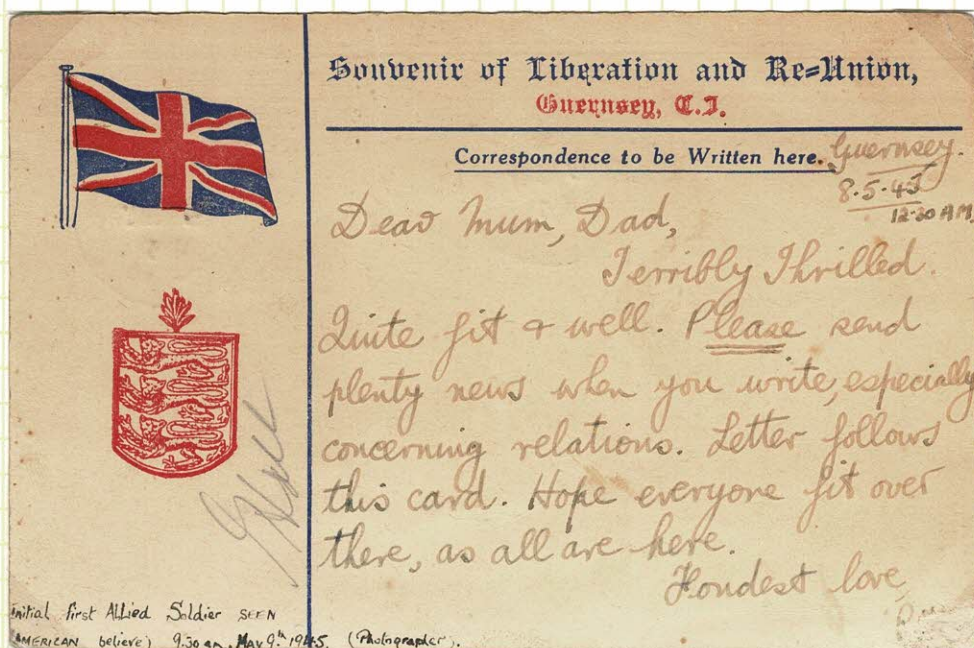
Reduced copy of rear

The second item is an envelope which carries the cancellation of Field Post Office 135, the initial reoccupying force post office. It was sent on 28 June 1945, less than three weeks after the end of the occupation.

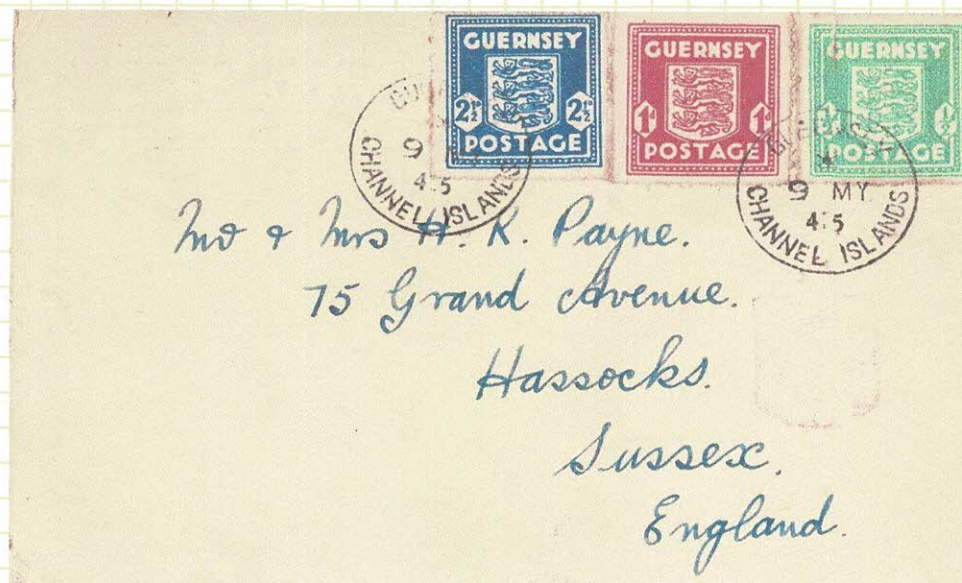


## The End of Occupation (7)

The card below is an example of a regular series of Liberation postcards. It is dated 8th May and is cancelled 9th May, so the printer must have clandestinely been preparing the cards beforehand - he obviously had access to supplies of ink and card. The writer is telling his parents that he is well and will write a letter afterwards. There is an interesting postscript on the bottom left, presumably written in the post office and saying that the writer had seen his first allied soldier, whom he thought was American - highly unlikely on 9th May.



½d Green, 1d Red and 2½d Blue on Postcard, Guernsey to Sussex.  
Two Guernsey Single Ring 9 May 1945 cancellations on front





### Liberation Issue (1)

Due to shortages, Guernsey had issued its own stamps during the war. Afterwards, things reverted to the pre-war situation; GB stamps were used and initially these did not show features indicating that they were specific to the channel islands. In 1958 a regional issue had unique Guernsey stamps and in 1969 the local Post Office became independent and started issuing its own stamps.

Before then, there was one 'local' issue, to commemorate the third anniversary of Liberation. Two stamps were issued, 1d and 2½d. This was not really a genuine local issue as the stamps, although intended for use primarily on the islands, were also available at eight Head Post Offices on the GB mainland. The envelope below, carrying the two stamps, is a first day cover.



1d Red and 2½d Blue on Envelope, Guernsey to London  
Guernsey Machine 10 May 1948 cancellation on front

The principal error in this issue is the so-called broken wheel variety. The lower of the two stamps underneath has this variety, a white blob on the wheel of the cart.

