

Gibraltar

175th Anniversary of the Penny Black

The Penny Black was the world's first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system. It was issued in Britain on 1 May 1840, for official use from 6 May of that year and features a profile of the Queen Victoria.

All London post offices received official issues of the new stamps but other offices throughout the United Kingdom did not, continuing to accept postage payments in cash only for a period. Post offices such as those in Bath began offering the stamp unofficially after 2 May 1840.

The idea of an adhesive stamp to indicate pre-payment of postage was part of Sir Rowland Hill's 1837 proposals to reform the British postal system; it was normal then for the recipient to pay postage on delivery. A companion idea, which Hill disclosed on 13 February 1837 at a government enquiry, was that of a separate sheet that folded to form an enclosure or envelope for carrying letters. At that time postage was charged by the sheet and on the distance travelled.

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SW n° 1685
175° Penny Black