

# *Date of issue of the small ½d air view stamp without the firm's name, JA 17*

By André Dufresne

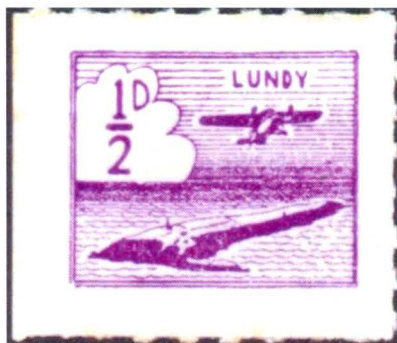


Fig 1

I was the happy purchaser of a much-coveted piece of Lundy postal history. To my knowledge it is the only instance of stamp no. JA17 postally used together with Lundy & British stamps and it is ex-Wim Ros's collection (Fig. 2). It is used on a parcel label addressed to Mr. Gade on Lundy. After my purchase I started researching everything that had been put in print about this stamp. I re-read my complete run of *The Puffin*, Newsletter of the Lundy Specialists Society, my complete run of the *Lundy Collectors Club Philatelic Quarterly* and my complete run of *The New Puffin Journal*, plus a good number of articles published since 1938 in the philatelic press, several books and catalogues about Lundy stamps, Mr. Gade's *My life on Lundy*, John Stanard's book *Lundy Island and the Lundy Locals* as well as his articles in *The American Philatelist*.



Fig 2

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Summing up what I read, 8 authors expressed the opinion that the stamp was not issued (Stanard, Rigby-Hall, Downing, Dulin, Chinchin, Wilson Smith, Gibson and Newman). Others confirm that it was used strictly on correspondence between Robert Boyd and Felix W. Gade, both directors of the "Lundy & Atlantic Coasts Air Lines Ltd." (Redgrave, Goldup, Holland, Langham, Chinchin, Wilson Smith, Gibson, Ros, Cichorz, Mullett, Liwendahl & Aitchison). The apparent contradiction for Chinchin, Wilson-Smith and Gibson is that they wrote that the stamp was unissued, but later added that it was used on mail between Boyd and Gade.

The 1942 Lundy Philatelic Bureau Official Catalogue and Current Listing offered this stamp for sale at \$15 with a mention that it was rare.

H. Stanley Redgrave was the first author to mention this stamp having been postally used on mail between Boyd and Gade, in his article "The Lundy Air Stamps" published in *Stamp Collecting* of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1942, pages 363 & 364. John Goldup also wrote an excellent article on this stamp, titled "Notes on Lundy", published in *The Stamp Lover* of August-September, 1954, pages 40-41. Based on correspondence exchanged with Robert Boyd, he clearly stated that the stamp was used on "official" parcels between Boyd and Gade and that it was not for use by the general public.

The first mention of an actual date of issue comes from A.F. Langham in an article presumably written by Barry N.D. Chinchin, titled "The first ½d. Air View stamp" in *The Puffin*, Newsletter of the Lundy Specialists Society, no. 16, January 1967, p. 14. In a letter sent, I believe, to Barry Chinchin, Tony Langham mentioned that "You may be interested to know that I have what I think is a unique Lundy stamp. It is one of the issues of 11<sup>th</sup> June 1937 of which I believe 24,000 were printed but were withdrawn. The copy I have is used and came over to Lundy on the first day of issue before Mr. Harman had time to intervene. My air view stamp is unfortunately not on cover. When Mr. Gade gave it to me it was attached to a fragment of brown paper which had no markings on it and I am afraid in my ignorance I removed this before mounting the stamp in my collection." In a letter to the Editor in the *Lundy Collectors Club Philatelic Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (whole no. 53, Spring 1992, pages 2-3), Tony Langham added that "Boyd flew only one consignment using these stamps, as Gade immediately saw that the new small stamp looked as if it was a Lundy stamp and being marked in "pence" values would upset the G.P.O.

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The example I have in my collection was sold to me by Mr. Gade who told me this story. He thought it was unique as it was the only one, he had kept in his special box of "treasures".

J.N. Holland, in his "Notes on the Airmails" in *The Puffin*, Newsletter of the Lundy Specialists Society, no. 3, May 1957, p. 2, writes that the stamp was "issued 20-7-1937. Withdrawn the following day".

An excellent article by the late Jim Mullett and Lars Liwendahl published in *The New Puffin Journal*, no. 14, Summer 2001, pages 11 to 15, (The 1937 Small Air Stamp "No 18e"), refers to a copy of this stamp that was in Stanard's collection, that went over to George Ulrich and ended up in Jim Mullett's collection. The authors write that it was mounted on a page where the "printing date" was given by Stanard as June 11th, 1937. Stanard's information came directly from Boyd and is as reliable as can be. Reading Mullett's and Liwendahl's article together with the above other sources, one must conclude that:

- 1) The stamp was indeed issued and it was in general use for one day only.
- 2) It was then withdrawn from public sale but continued in use on parcels exchanged between Boyd and Gade until sometime after 18<sup>th</sup> April 1938. Thus, Jim Mullett and Lars Liwendahl were right in concluding that this stamp is not an essay but Lundy's first "official stamp", even though it was issued by the airline company rather than by the island.

Now the last question that remains unsolved is: when was it issued? We have three possible dates: Langham gives 10<sup>th</sup> June 1937, Stanard 11<sup>th</sup> June 1937 and Holland gives 20<sup>th</sup> July 1937 but he does not mention his source. I may have part of the answer.

In Negev Holyland's (Michael Bale's) 7<sup>th</sup> August 1991 Number 3 Lundy auction, lot 54 was described as a "vertical strip of three of this essay with centrally struck Chichen type Cd cancellation". This strip now rests in my collection and it has a partially legible dated type Cc (not Cd) cancellation reading 1\_ JU\_ 1937(Fig. 3).





*Fig 3*

The date could be anything between 10 and 19 as only the digit "1" is legible and it is clearly the first of two digits. As to the month, the third letter is illegible with just an upright left stroke that could be the left leg of the "N" in "June" or of the "L" in July (Fig. 4). By using a high-resolution scanner and increasing the size 10 times, it is possible to make out certain parts of a diagonal stroke of what would be the diagonal leg of the letter "N" of June but these traces are very faint. So now we have narrowed down the date of issue to June or July 1937, and we still have 3 possible dates according to Langham, Stanard and Holland: 10<sup>th</sup> June, 11<sup>th</sup> June or 20<sup>th</sup> July. Thanks to the dated cancel on my strip of 3 we also have proof that the month of issue was either June or July 1937 but more probably June.



Fig 4

Based on all the above my guess would be that the date of issue was 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> June 1937. This strip of 3 could well have been cancelled on the day of issue.

There are a few other copies of this stamp around in cancelled condition. There was a block of 6 in Jim Mullett's collection, and Roger Hudson's block of 5 later broken down as a block of 4 that also ended up in Jim Mullett's collection and a single in Lars Liwendahl's collection. Does anyone have a used copy with a readable 1937 cancellation date? Is my strip of three the only dated cancellation on the JA17 small Air View 1½d. violet? Because this stamp was essentially used on parcels, multiples seem to have been the rule: heavier weight meant a higher postal rate. I have two used strips of 3 in my collection and we know of a block of 5 (now broken down) and a block of 6.

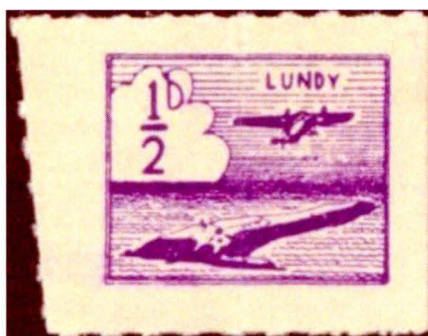


Fig 5

I also have 3 mint copies of JA17, one with slanted perforations (Fig. 5) possibly coming from Michael Bale's find of an almost complete sheet (L.C.C.P.Q., no. 65, Spring 1995).

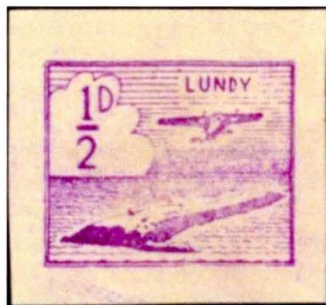
My copy would be the third stamp from the bottom right-hand column; one copy with a double row of horizontal perforations at top (Fig. 6) and another with an additional row of horizontal perforations at bottom (Fig. 7), plus an imperforate proof (Fig. 8).



*Fig 6*



*Fig 7*



*Fig 8*

Now getting back to what started this search, my newly-acquired parcel label. It was used on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1938 according to the Lundy cancellation (Type Bb) on the Lundy 1p stamp (JA2) and partial British parcel cancellation. The Air Stamp is cancelled with the Type Cd (undated) cancel. We know of at least two more copies on cover or on piece: there is a parcel piece with this Air View stamp only, with an undated type Cd cancel as well as a cover with the stamp cancelled by a manuscript cross by pen, both shown in Mullett's and Liwendahl's article. Does anyone have more "on cover" or "on piece" examples, or dated cancelled copies, strips or blocks?

Anyone interested in my 20 pages of notes and excerpts of articles on the JA17 Air View stamp can send me an email to: [dufresne@generation.net](mailto:dufresne@generation.net)