



British and Guernsey Stamps and Their Use During German Occupation; 1940-45

German Occupied Guernsey

Exhibit Plan

Purpose

World War II German occupation and the severe material shortages it created had significant consequences for the postage stamps and covers of Guernsey. The exhibit shows how occupation affected the design, printing and use of British and indigenous Guernsey postage stamps on this island from June 30, 1940 to May 9, 1945.

Introduction

Guernsey, a British Crown dependency, is one of three principal islands of the Channel Islands. It lies in the English Channel, about 30 miles from the northwest coast of France. Jersey and Alderney are two other principal islands. The Channel Islands were the only British territory in Europe occupied by the Germans in World War II.

WWII was going badly for Britain in 1940. The British could not muster military resources to defend the Islands. In mid-June, the British demilitarized the Channel Islands and citizens were given the opportunity to evacuate. Within five days, nearly 19,000 Guernsey islanders were evacuated — about one-half the population — resulting in the closing of several sub-post offices and substantially curtailing Guernsey postal operations.

The Germans invaded Guernsey on June 30, 1940 to prevent its use by the Allies as a staging area for a possible invasion of Europe. Guernsey post offices ceased being part of the British postal system and began operating under supervision of German military authorities. During the next five years, the people of Guernsey, and eventually their German occupiers, became increasingly isolated from the rest of world. Shortages of food and material goods became increasing acute. By mid-1944, both the people of Guernsey and their German occupiers found themselves virtually imprisoned together and facing considerable hunger and privation. The production of postage stamps, processing of mail, and scope of postal services mirrored these difficulties. Occupation ended with British liberation on May 9, 1945, a few days after the final surrender of Germany on mainland Europe.

Section 1: Use of British Postage Stamps; Guernsey Postal Rates; Authorized British Bisects; Bisects on Covers.

Section 2: First Guernsey Postage Stamp - Local One Penny (1d) Arms; Color Shades, Imprint Blocks & Paper Varieties; Use on Covers; Mixed Franking.

Section 3: Second Guernsey Postage Stamp - Local Half Penny (½d) Arms; Color Shades, Imprint Blocks & Paper Varieties; Use on Covers; Mixed, Multiple & Combined Franking.

Section 4: Combined Use of Guernsey One Penny & Half Penny Arms Postage Stamps on Covers; Mixed, Multiple & Combined Franking.

Section 5: Guernsey One Penny (1d) & Half Penny (½d) Arms Postage Stamps on French Banknote Paper; Paper Shades; Imprint Blocks; Use on Covers; Mixed, Multiple & Combined Franking.

Section 6: Guernsey Arms Postage Stamps on Re-Used & Home-Made Covers; Use of Invalid Revenue Stamp.

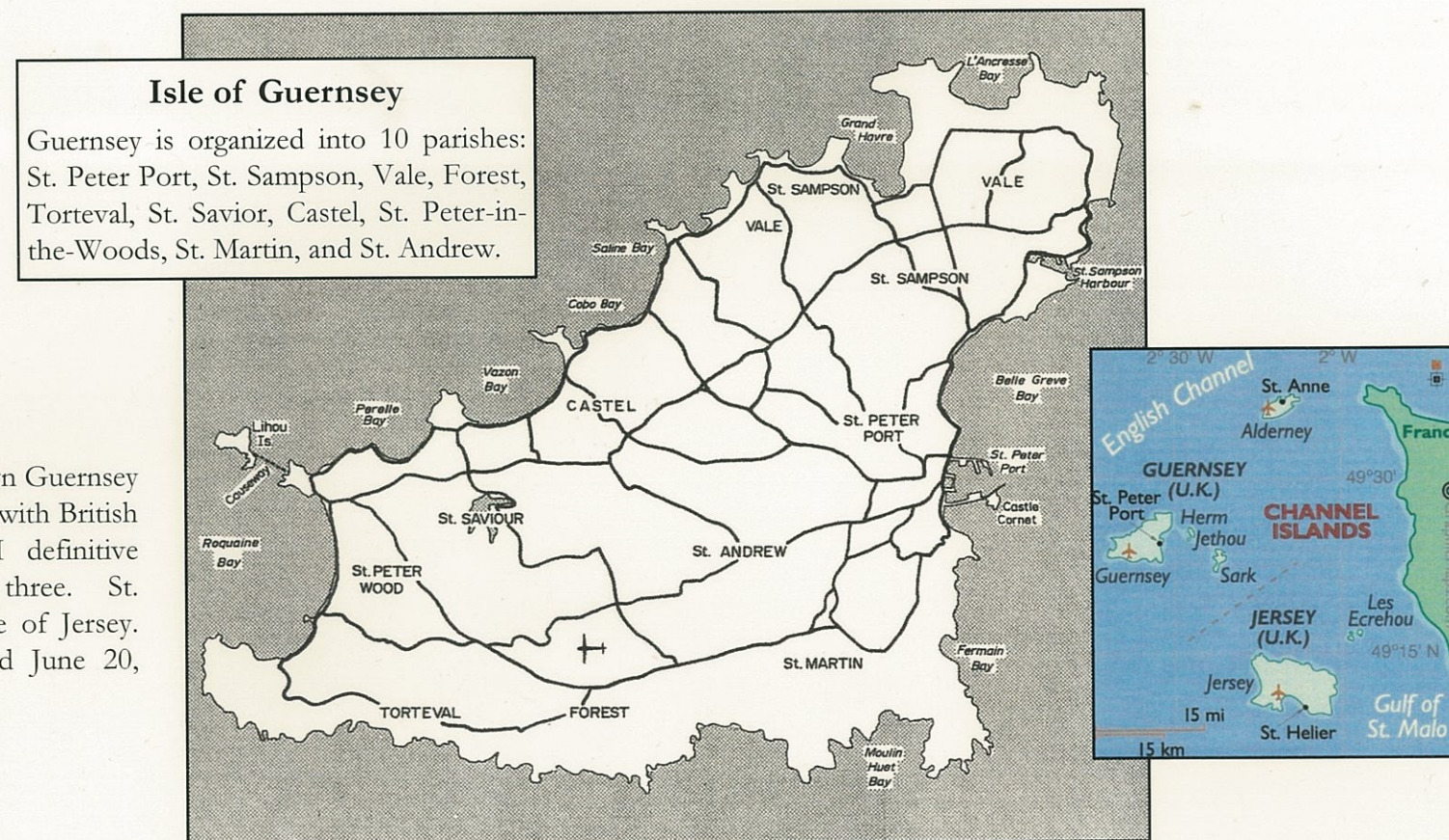
Section 7: Third Guernsey Postage Stamp - Local Two Penny Half (2½d) Arms; Color Shades; Imprint Blocks; Use on Covers; Mixed & Combined Franking; Liberation & Restoration; Last Day of Use Covers.

Exhibit Highlights

Key and Uncommon Items are Framed in Violet



Left: Only known Guernsey occupation cover with British ½d Edward VIII definitive booklet strip of three. St. Peter Port to Isle of Jersey. Machine cancelled June 20, 1942.



Isle of Guernsey

Guernsey is organized into 10 parishes: St. Peter Port, St. Sampson, Vale, Forest, Torteval, St. Saviour, Castel, St. Peter-in-the-Woods, St. Martin, and St. Andrew.