

Our National Philatelist

Sir Edward Denny Bacon, KCVO  
(1860-1938)

A short biographical sketch

by  
Ron Negus, FRPSL

1999  
The Royal Philatelic Society London  
41 Devonshire Place, London, W1N 1PE

[SUPPLEMENT TO THE LONDON PHILATELIST, DECEMBER 1999]

© Ron Negus  
Canterbury: August 1999

Frontispiece: Photograph of Sir Edward taken when he resigned as President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London in 1923: now on display in the meeting room at 41 Devonshire Place, alongside the other past-presidential portraits.

---

## Contents

5	The Bacon family tree
6	His own collections
6	His business activities
7	Early activities in organised philately
8	The Tapling Collection
9	The Expert Committee
11	Philatelic literature
13	The Crawford Library and Catalogue
13	His work for Henry Duveen
14	Curator of the King's Philatelic Collections
15	Personal characteristics
16	Association with Perkins, Bacon & Co.
16	Other honours and awards
17	Poor health
18	His knighthood
19	Family bequests
20	How others saw his life
22	Conclusion
22	APPENDIX: His last Will
24	Sources used.
Inside back cover	Acknowledgements

Our National Philatelist



Sir Edward Denny Bacon, KCVO  
(1860-1938)

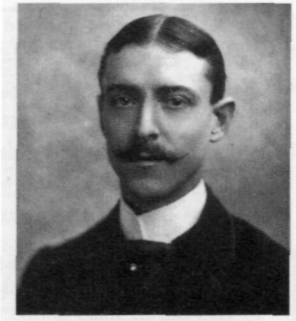
by  
Ron Negus, FRPSL

**THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY LONDON**

In the period from the late 1880s until just prior to the Second World War, one man's name was pre-eminent in British philatelic circles. He was Sir Edward Denny Bacon, KCVO, the Philatelic Adviser to the Trustees of the British Museum from 1892 to 1938, and Curator of the Royal Philatelic Collection from 1913 to 1938.

Bacon's father was also named Edward. When his first son was born, on 29 August 1860 at Stockwell in Surrey, he was baptised as Edward Denny Bacon, and throughout his life he was known within the family as 'Denny' to distinguish him from his father. The name, Denny, was his mother's maiden name.

For all his external contacts, Bacon was always referred to and listed as 'E.D. Bacon', and signed himself thus on his correspondence. However, on his first set of visiting cards, printed just after his marriage, he styled himself 'E. Denny Bacon', and, towards the very end of his life, when writing to close associates he signed his letters 'Edward D. Bacon'.



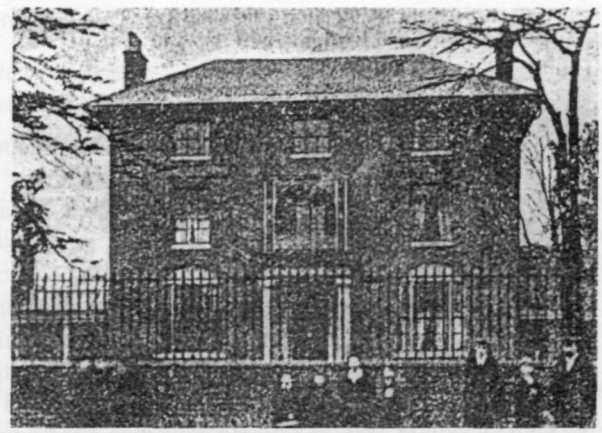
*E.D. Bacon  
photographed circa 1891*

### **The Bacon family tree**

Edward Denny had five brothers: Walter, Arthur, Charles, George and Horace, and three sisters: Helen, Alice and Olive. Their mother died shortly after Olive was born in 1878 leaving Edward (senior) a widower, with his large family, whilst still in his early 40s.

Denny's father was a Corn Merchant by profession with an office in the City of London. He lived in Stockwell for some years, where Denny, Helen and Walter were born, and then moved to Brixton for a couple of years, during which time Arthur joined the growing family. The Bacon's then crossed the river into Essex, where Charles and Alice were born in Romford, and then to Upminster for the arrival of the remaining children George, Horace and Olive. With the loss of his wife and having need for more space, the family then moved to Ilford and took up residence in Ilford Hall.

Ilford Hall, where Edward Denny Bacon lived until his marriage, was an imposing looking three-storey house with large grounds. It was surrounded by a high wall with iron railings on top, and faced on to Ilford High Road, the main thoroughfare of this Essex suburb of London. When the Bacon family decided to sell the Hall just prior to the turn of the century, there was some interest shown in purchasing it by the Ilford Urban Council. However, the asking price was considered excessive and the sale did not proceed. The Council did, however, hold regular meetings in one room there, from November 1898, until their new Town Hall was completed. In the meantime, Ilford Hall was rented by a Miss Ward for her High School for Girls and Kindergarten until 1901 when the area was designated for re-development and the Hall was pulled down to make way for shops.



*Ilford Hall – photographed in 1900*

On 28 July 1885, Edward Denny Bacon married Alice Jane Atkins at Coston Parish Church in Norfolk, where his father-in-law was a farmer. His wife was 6 years older than her husband, and they set up home together in Ilford at 7 Cranbrook Park Villas.

Their three children were all born there. The first, a son, was born on 16 June 1887 and was christened Donald Victor. In the following year, on 16 October, his sister, Barbara Alice Joan arrived. Finally, on the 7 February 1891, a second daughter was born and was named Beatrice Olive Constance. She was always referred to as Constance, and signed herself 'Miss C. Bacon'.

1885. Marriage solemnized at <u>Coston Church</u> in the Parish of <u>Coston</u> in the County of <u>Norfolk</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
19	July 28 <sup>th</sup> 1885.	Edward Denny Bacon	23	Bachelor	Merchant	Ilford, Essex	Edward Bacon	Merchant
		Alice Jane Atkins	31	Spinster		Coston	Charles Ladywood Atkins	Farmer.
Married in the <u>Parish Church</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <u>Banns</u> or after <u>R. B. Slipper.</u> by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<u>Edward Denny Bacon</u> <u>Alice Jane Atkins</u>		in the Presence of us,		<u>Charles Ladywood Atkins</u> <u>Edward Bacon</u> <u>Mary Ann Hubbard.</u>		

Copy of Bacon's marriage certificate

In addition, the household at Ilford employed three domestic servants, Ellen Crane as a nanny, Ellen Danby as cook, and Florence Woollard as a housemaid.

In December 1895, Bacon moved his family from Essex to "Fairview", Spencer Road, South Croydon in Surrey. Sadly, in August 1897, whilst only 9 years old, Bacon's eldest daughter, Barbara, died of tubercular peritonitis.

He suffered another grievous blow whilst at "Fairview", when on 21 July 1902 his wife, Alice, died of a cerebral haemorrhage, aged 49.

Not surprisingly, the house had most unhappy memories for him, and towards the end of 1904, he moved with Donald and Constance, and his servants, to another part of South Croydon, and set up a new home at "The Gables", 12 Croham Park Avenue. This remained the family home until Sir Edward died, 34 years later.

### His own collections

In an early interview for the *Philatelic Record*, Bacon recalled that he had started as a general collector at the age of seven. He kept up this collection until he was 22, and then disposed of the bulk of it to Captain W.E. Williams, and only retained his Japanese material. At that point, he began to collect postal stationery postcards seriously, but eventually gave this up and sold his holdings to Mr T.K. Tapling. They are now held at the British Library as part of the Tapling collection.

Whilst developing his postcard interests, he also concentrated on the stamps, envelopes and postcards of Japan, building upon the items he had retained from his general collection. By 1890, his Japanese material was pronounced to be "the finest lot of Japan ever got together". The collection was made up of many entire sheets of stamps, and included all known varieties and shades. It was displayed at the London International Exhibition in that year, and would have won a top award if Denny Bacon had not been one of the judges at this major event. Shortly after the exhibition, he sold his Japanese material to Ferrary for an undisclosed sum, but said to be at least £50,000 at today's prices.

Having disposed of this major holding, Bacon began much smaller collections of some of the West Indian islands – notably St. Lucia – and also of Turkey. He also made collections of Nyasaland, Antioquia and the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's stamps. All of these were really research collections, and gave rise to articles from Bacon in the philatelic press from time to time.

### His business activities

After completing his education, Edward Denny had joined his father's business as his assistant, and finally replaced his father as partner with William Hastings until December 1895. Their business was as Malt Factors and they occupied a ground-floor office (one of 14 in the building) at 41 Seething Lane. After the

partnership was ended, a firm of Corn Merchants, R. & W. Paul, who had offices in the floor above Bacon, took over his old ground-floor office, but still retained their original one on the first floor.

The Bacon & Hastings business was successful at first, but was beginning to fall upon hard times by the time Bacon's son was born. In October 1887, he had written to a friend saying "Business has been worse than ever this year with us and there does not seem the least probability of a change. The middle man is gradually being ousted out".

He struggled on for a few more years, but finally decided to give up, and on 3 January 1896 the following note was published in *The London Gazette*.

Notice is hereby given, that the partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned William Smith Hastings and Edward Denny Bacon carrying on business as Malt Factors at No. 41 Seething Lane in the City of London under the style or firm of Bacon and Hastings has been dissolved by mutual consent as and from the 31st day of December 1895. All debts due to and owing by the said late firm will be received and paid by the said William Smith Hastings.

Dated 31st day of December 1895

W. S. HASTINGS  
E. D. BACON

From then on, at the age of 35, he decided to devote the rest of his life to Philately - a pursuit that was already occupying much of his free time.

### **Early activities in organised philately**

Sixteen years earlier, when he was just 19 years old and after requesting a copy of the Statutes, he had applied for membership of the [now Royal] Philatelic Society, London on 11 May 1880. It is interesting to note that in the obituary published in THE LONDON PHILATELIST in June 1938, Sir John Wilson incorrectly stated that "Bacon had joined as a Life Fellow on May 8th, 1880". In fact, the first reference to Bacon being a Life Fellow of the Society appears in the membership list for January 1928.

Bacon's letter in 1880, in which he enclosed a 10/- postal order for the annual subscription as an ordinary member, asks the Secretary, Mr Maitland Burnett, to ensure that his initials and the number of his office in Seething Lane are correctly recorded. The fact that these details are mentioned suggest that the Statutes had been incorrectly addressed when sent to him originally. In accordance with the rules, Bacon was formally proposed for membership at the next meeting by Mr V.G. de Ysasi, a Vice-President, and seconded by Mr Burnett.

In the year after he joined, he took up the first of his official duties for the Society when he was appointed as Joint Auditor, having only just reached the age of 21. From there, Bacon was invited to join the Committee of the London Society, and in October 1882 took up that position. In February 1885, Bacon took over the role of Hon. Treasurer, and in November of the same year became Hon. Secretary as well. He filled these two offices with distinction until December 1888, when the problems with his business and the demands of his young family led him to give them up.

In appreciation of his work on behalf of the Society, he was presented with a testimonial from the membership on 29 March 1889, which took the form of an inscribed silver tea tray. This presentation was made by T.K. Tapling, MP, the Vice-President, at the then meeting room of the Society at the Salisbury Hotel. Despite having to give up his official roles, Bacon continued to provide his support by being re-elected as an ordinary Committee member.

During this early period of service with the Society, Bacon had become a close friend of Tapling, and had helped him in his ambition to build up the finest collection of stamps in the United Kingdom. As the owner of a successful carpet manufacturing business, Tapling had the financial resources to satisfy his hobby, and

Bacon added the required technical expertise to ensure that he bought only the best specimens available.

It was a great personal blow, therefore, when Tapling died in 1891 at the very early age of 35. By his will, he bequeathed his collection to the nation, and it passed to the British Museum. There was a need for the vast accumulation of material to be sorted and arranged in a manner that could be declared to be a National Collection, and the Trustees of the Museum asked Bacon to oversee this task.

On 4 March 1893, the notice of the meeting of the Philatelic Society, London, to be held on the following Friday at its new headquarters at Effingham House, contained the following note under the "business to be taken" heading of the agenda -

*To elect a Member of the Publishing Committee in the place of Mr. E.D. Bacon who begs leave to retire in consequence of his duties in relation to the arrangement of the "Tapling Collection".*

Bacon had been a member of the Publishing Committee since its inception in 1890.

### **The Tapling Collection**

The Tapling collection, when passed across to the British Museum in 1891, filled three large wooden cases, deposited in an immense iron safe. Edward Denny Bacon, who was entrusted with the duty of placing the specimens in order, started his work on 21 May 1892, and calculated that it would take until the turn of the century for it to be completed. Mr Tapling left a certain sum to be expended in mounting and arranging the collection so as to make it available for reference, but all this money had been used before the work was completed. In 1897, the Treasury included a sum of Government money in the Estimates of the British Museum, for the completion of the work of arranging the Tapling collection.

An interesting event that occurred shortly before Bacon started work on the collection was his publishing a leaflet offering a £10 Reward for information leading to the recovery of a copy of the British Guiana 4-cent ("cottonreel") first issue of 1850 on cover. Whilst a copy of this leaflet exists, there is no further information about the missing stamp, or whether it was ever recovered. This stamp was not part of the Tapling collection, however, even though it was a classic rarity (see opposite).

Initially, Denny Bacon undertook the task of sorting the collection himself, spending three days per week at the British Museum. After three years, in 1895, Bacon was given some assistance in the massive task of arranging the collection by Miss Jane Hamilton, and she was instructed in what to do by him. Bacon would visit the Museum periodically to check her work. (Miss Hamilton was the aunt of Ian T. Hamilton, who, for many years after World War II, was a well-known editor of the respected *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*.) From 1892 until 1896, Bacon was awarded the sum of £200 per annum for his efforts, and Miss Hamilton was paid 1/6d per hour. These amounts were later reduced to £150 per annum and 1/- per hour respectively, until the task was completed. Bacon's last day of work on the collection was on 13 September 1899.

During the London International Exhibition of 1906, delegates were invited to the British Museum on 28 May at 11 a.m. to view the Tapling Collection, and were conducted around by Denny Bacon on behalf of the Trustees. In his address to these visitors, he provided the following information -

*"At the time the collection was received at the Museum, in 1891, only one or two countries had been definitely arranged by Mr. Tapling. The system he had adopted being to mount each stamp or block of stamps upon a white card with a red-line border. You will see that his intention and wishes to have the whole collection mounted in this way have been faithfully carried out.*

*"For many years I had worked with Mr. Tapling in the formation of the collection, and when it passed into the care of the British Museum, I was entrusted with the rearrangement and mounting of the contents - a labour of love which took just seven years to accomplish.*

*"On the completion of the work there was great difficulty in determining which was the most suitable method for displaying the stamps to students and the public. After numerous experiments had been made it was decided to make use of cabinets with vertical slides, such as you see before you, and these three cabinets were constructed*



**£10 REWARD.****LOST**

Between the 28th April and the 2nd May, 1892,

A "CIRCULAR" 4 CENTS FIRST ISSUE

**BRITISH GUIANA POSTAGE STAMP.**

This Stamp is pale yellow in colour, and although it has hardly any margin, the impression is very good and clear. It was attached to an entire letter-sheet, which is addressed to John Kennedy, Esq., and the letter is signed Hugh Greene, and is believed to be dated December 31st, 1850.

Anyone having the stamp shown to them is requested to communicate at once with the advertiser, and meanwhile to retain possession of the specimen.

Anyone purchasing the said stamp will be buying stolen property.

The above reward will be paid by the undersigned for the recovery of the stamp in good condition.

41, SEETHING LANE,  
LONDON, E.C.

4th May, 1892.

*E. D. Bacon.*

*The leaflet offering a reward*

at a cost of £3,600 [= approx. £180,000 at today's prices]. The three cabinets contain the whole of the adhesive stamps in the collection, with the exception of nine specimens of the greatest rarity, which are usually shown in a special room, but which the Museum authorities have kindly had sent round today for our inspection.

"The adhesives fill 1104 slides, and there are four sheets of stamps in each slide; and the remaining slides - 1105 to 1188 - contain a selection of the early issues of the entire envelopes and postcards, of which there is a wonderfully fine and complete collection. The number of adhesives cannot be far short of 100,000 specimens, while of the envelopes and postcards there are many thousands.

"There are fine and rare stamps scattered on the pages of most countries but the strongest sections are Great Britain and Colonies, and Europe. The best individual countries are Afghanistan, British Guiana, France, Great Britain, Hawaiian Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, New South Wales, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the Transvaal. The slides are arranged in strictly alphabetical order, and the names of the countries are placed above each row of slides. In addition there are catalogues on the table with an index to the slides, so that the stamps of any country can be found almost immediately."

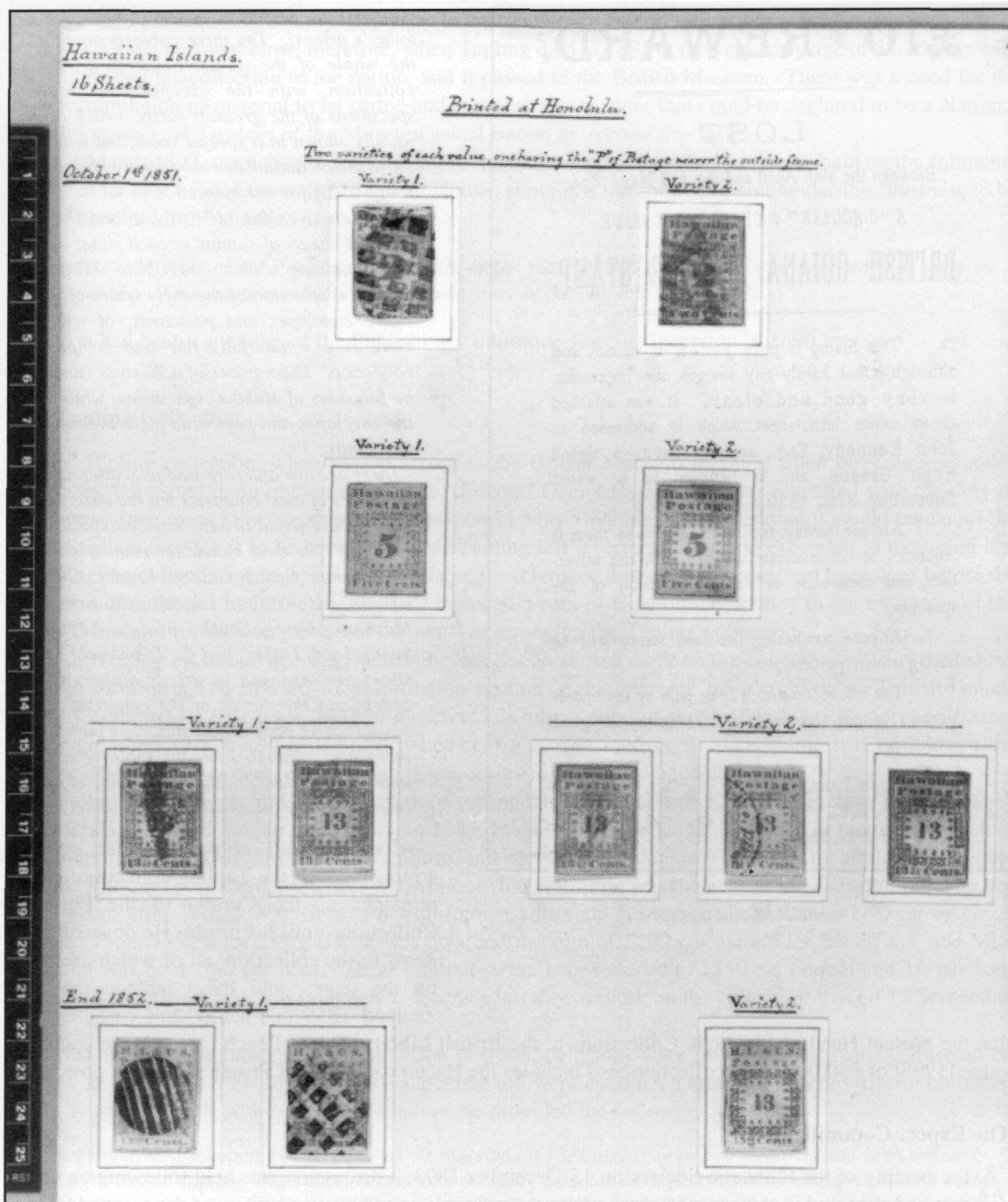
After he had completed the original arrangement of the Tapling collection, Bacon remained as the Curator of the Philatelic Collections until his death. He donated many items to the collection, all of which are noted on the pages, and these include the New Zealand 1855 one-penny dull carmine issue

that the present Head of Philatelic Collections at the British Library, David Beech, states has a catalogue value [1998] of £30,000. The collection also includes the Bacon collection of Postal Stationery postcards.

**The Expert Committee**

At a meeting of the Philatelic Society on 15 December 1893, a discussion was held following an article that had appeared in THE LONDON PHILATELIST the previous month about numbers of dangerous forgeries which were appearing on the market. At the following meeting, a fortnight later, Denny Bacon proposed the following resolution -

*"That in view of the enormous increase of highly dangerous forgeries and that one of the Society's objectives is their detection and prevention, 'an instruction be given to the Council to appoint an Expert Committee, who shall adjudicate upon any stamp or stamps submitted to them for their opinion'."*



A specimen from the Tapling Collection, as written up by E.D. Bacon

The motion was seconded by M.P. Castle, then editor of THE LONDON PHILATELIST, and the Expert Committee came into being. Its first members were Bacon, as Chairman, Castle and Major E.B. Evans, and it started work in April 1894.

Six years later, in June 1900, Bacon wrote to the Secretary of the Society saying he did not seek re-election to the Council, and continuing -

*"Whether the members do me the honour to elect me again or not, I think they should be told that I can only act on the Expert Committee for a very few weeks longer. After that period, I shall have no collection of stamps I can refer to and it will be quite impossible for me to carry on the work."*

The fact that he had no personal collections for reference was of little import since he had direct access to both the Tapling and Earl of Crawford's collections, and [from 1913] to the Royal Collection as well. From 1900, however, the work of expertising was lightened by the appointment of two other notable philatelists, Gordon Smith and Robert Ehrenbach, to the Committee.

In the early years, meetings of the Expert Committee (Bacon, Castle and Evans) were held at Stanley Gibbons' premises in the Strand, and so submitted specimens were able to be compared with Gibbons' extensive stocks as well.

His resignation from the Expert Committee was not accepted, following his letter in 1900, and he continued to be Chairman until 1926, and as a consultant to the Committee until his death. In September 1924 he had told T.W. Hall, then President of the Royal, that the work of the Expert Committee was getting too much for him. He thought that because of the flood of new issues that were appearing, it was becoming impossible to expertise them. He suggested, therefore, that only stamps issued up to 31 December 1913 should be accepted. This proposal was put before the Council and ratified by them and announced in THE LONDON PHILATELIST in October 1924.

### Philatelic literature

In May 1893, Bacon had accumulated enough books to justify having his own book-plate printed. The work was entrusted to Perkins, Bacon and, on the 9th of that month, he received the 200 gummed labels he had ordered. The design showed a rising sun within two interlaced triangles forming a six-pointed star, and these were encircled with a snake. At the top of the design was a pig (implying an association with bacon), and the lower portion bore the Latin tag "Sapere Aude" on a ribbon, with the name E. D. BACON in fancy script capitals at the foot. The Latin expression is taken from a poem by Horace, and roughly translates as "Dare to be wise". This initial supply of book-plates lasted Bacon just over 18 months, and he placed a repeat order for 200 in January 1895, and then renewed them as required in subsequent years.

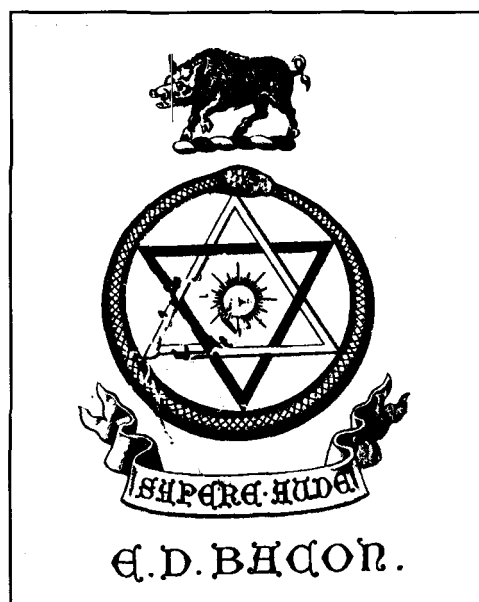
When his library was finally offered for sale, as individual volumes, in 1939 by F. Hugh Vallancey, the sale catalogue said -

*"Most of the important books contain the "Bacon" bookplate: but, as the original plate has been lost or mislaid, a duplicate has been made, and sufficient copies have been printed to enable me to have one inserted in each book (other than journals)."*

The sale of the Bacon library was still incomplete when Vallancey's premises and entire stock were destroyed in an air-raid, on 10 May 1941.

In a biography of Denny Bacon, Charles J. Phillips noted that -

*"About 1894, I arranged with Mr. Bacon that he should help us to publish the 'Stanley Gibbons Philatelic Handbooks', these to be either the work of himself or in conjunction with other noted philatelists."*



*Bacon's bookplate*

The following works were produced under this arrangement:

1895	<i>St. Vincent (with Lt F.H. Napier)</i>
1896	<i>Barbados (with Lt F.H. Napier)</i>
1899	<i>Reprints</i>
1902	<i>Grenada (with Lt F.H. Napier)</i>
1917	<i>Turks Islands</i>

Bacon was known to be a keen student of stamp production methods, and spent much time in research at the headquarters of Perkins, Bacon & Co. This involved the firm's staff in a great deal of work finding the answers to Bacon's probing questions. In December 1896, he received an invoice from Perkins, Bacon & Co. for £200 [which equals just over £10,000 at today's prices] which read

*"For time spent in searching books, investigating questions as to printing, perforating and delivering various stamps, taking extracts, etc. and general services rendered during 7 years past, as agreed."*

Because of his close association with this eminent firm of security printers over so many years, there is often confusion about whether he was a family member. In fact, apart from sharing a surname with one of the founding directors, Edward Denny Bacon had no connection with the firm at all.

In an interview published in the *Philatelic Record* in January 1897, Bacon is quoted as saying that his own library of 700 volumes was far from complete. He was asked if he knew of many other literature collectors besides himself, and answered -

*"When I first began I hardly knew anyone; but I am glad to say that in recent years several philatelists have taken up the collection of books, both here and on the Continent. It is chiefly by exchanging amongst ourselves that we are able to add the early works to our shelves."*

Then asked if he felt literature was needed by collectors, he replied -

*"I do; indeed a philatelic library is almost a necessity in these days of specialism. For a philatelic writer it is an unmistakable necessity".*

To assist him with his writing, Bacon kept a detailed index of the magazine articles in his library that contained useful research results, or included matters of philatelic importance. The index was compiled on individual slips of paper, measuring 7 inches by 3 inches, with a main title of the country that the article covered written along the top, and the detailed bibliographic reference written underneath. The slips themselves were arranged alphabetically and the whole index housed in four specially-made wooden boxes - each measuring 15 inches by 8 inches.

*Dutch Indies*  
*Gray (D.C.) The first issue 10 cents of the Dutch East*  
*Indies. London Philatelist. 1934. XLIII p. 265.*

A typical slip from Bacon's magazine index

The famous writer, Fred J. Melville, noted that he had first met Bacon, whilst Melville himself was a schoolboy, in 1893. In that year, he had accompanied his father - who was the London correspondent for the *Scotsman* newspaper - to an exhibition by the Philatelic Society, London at their rooms in Arundel Street. Bacon was assisting the press with information on that occasion, and learning of the young Melville's interest in stamps presented him with a copy of the Society's recently launched journal THE LONDON PHILATELIST. Melville wrote later that this was probably the start of his own extensive philatelic library, and his deep involvement with philatelic literature.

In September 1907, the Philatelic Literature Society was founded in London to bring together those

collectors having an interest in the collection and study of the literature of the hobby. Bacon was appointed as first President of the P.L.S. in 1909 and remained in that post until 1914. The Society was disbanded in 1918, and, after attempts to revive it failed, was finally dissolved in 1929.

### **The Crawford Library and Catalogue**

In its "Philatelists of Today" feature in 1912, *The Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly* covering Bacon's work to that point wrote –

*"Philatelic literature, at the present time, claims the lion's share of Mr. Bacon's time and attention. For years he has been associated with the great library formed by Lord Crawford, and last year [1911] we were given monumental evidence of his labours in the shape of the 'Catalogue of the Philatelic Library of the Earl of Crawford, K.T.' – a work which richly deserved the large gold medal conferred upon it at the Vienna Exhibition last autumn, to say nothing of the plaudits of the whole philatelic world."*

The foundation of this great library was the collection of philatelic works formed by John K. Tiffany of St. Louis, USA which he sold to Lord Crawford for ten thousand dollars. The Crawford Library was considerably expanded by the Earl and now contains the majority of the early works of philatelic literature published up to 1911. It is now housed at the British Library, where it may be consulted by researchers

Before his work with the Library, of course, Bacon had assisted the Earl with the arrangement and classification of his large collection of adhesives, although it is well known that the Earl liked to put his stamps in order himself and often added personal notes and sketches to his pages.

Bacon had a wonderful grasp of detail, and the completeness of the Crawford Library owes a great deal to his diligence. Stanley Gibbons Ltd were given the task of obtaining stamp journals for inclusion in the Library. When any were overdue, particularly the smaller, overseas journals, Bacon would visit the familiar Strand office with his 'list of missing' and letters would have to go off immediately to the negligent editor or publisher. Bacon was also a regular collaborator in the work of keeping the Gibbons Catalogue, Part 1, accurate and up-to-date.

During the period when he was deeply involved with the Earl of Crawford, Bacon often used to join a little group of stamp men for lunch at a reserved table on the balcony of the Hotel Cecil. This hotel was opposite Stanley Gibbons Ltd, in the Strand, and at one time this fact was noted in the heading on Gibbons' notepaper. The host at these gatherings was Charles J. Phillips of Gibbons, and regular attendees were the other well-known dealers, W.H. Peckitt, Hugo Griebert and Hamilton Smith. Apart from Bacon, other prominent collectors, who joined the lunch party from time to time, included M.P. Castle, Leslie Hausburg, and Lieut. Napier. With such a formidable group meeting regularly, there was obviously very little that happened in the stamp fraternity which was not common knowledge before long. The Hotel Cecil was demolished in 1928 to make way for Shell-Mex House, but the luncheon parties had stopped some time before that.

### **His work for Henry Duveen**

The noted American collector, Mr Henry Duveen, spent a fortune in buying notable collections as they came on the market. He was always concerned about condition, and preferred to buy unused specimens if possible. His collection grew to occupy 63 albums, and contained examples of all the fine stamps that are known as 'classics' today. Nothing issued after 1900 was included, and for many countries he only collected issues up to 1890.

In June 1901, Mr. Duveen made a free gift of the whole collection to his wife, Dora Charlotte, and from that date it was known as Mrs Duveen's collection. He realised that with a collection of the importance he was building up for his wife, she would need expert assistance. As a result, he engaged the services of Edward Denny Bacon.

Bacon set to work examining all the items and rejecting any repaired or forged specimens. The remainder were admitted to the collection, and he spent many hours arranging and writing-up the material with his usual high standards of penmanship. The “best and nothing but the best” was the motto adopted and in consequence the collection was amongst the best in the world for its time.

### Curator of the King's Philatelic Collections

Upon the death of J.A. Tilleard in September 1913, Bacon was appointed to succeed him as the Curator of the King's Philatelic Collections. The command came at a time when he was nearly ready, along with others, to set out for the first New York International Philatelic Exhibition in October 1913, at which he was to have been a member of the jury. His new duties involved cancelling his intended visit to New York. From that time onward, the care, arrangement, enlargement and study of the Royal Collection became his life-work.

His work on the Royal Collection over nearly twenty-five years emphasised his pre-eminence as what the *Stamp Lover* termed “our National Philatelist”. King George V most of all appreciated his Curator's extensive knowledge, meticulous care, and long and faithful service. The King showed the high regard in which he held his Philatelic Curator in making him M.V.O. in 1917, C.V.O. in 1922, and K.C.V.O. in 1932. In his last years, his daughter had assisted him in his work at Buckingham Palace.

In *The British Philatelist* obituary notice, Charles Nissen recorded -

*“On his appointment, in 1913, his first task was a stupendous one. It was to re-arrange completely and write up the entire collection.”*

*When the late King George V was in residence at Buckingham Palace, a day seldom passed that he did not spend some time with Sir Edward.*

*The death of King George V was to Sir Edward a shattering personal loss. No longer would they spend their time together, and discuss philatelic matters and examine the gems contained in the Royal Collection. When, some little time later, the Royal Collection was moved to a different room at Buckingham Palace, Sir Edward expressed his gratification that he would no longer study in the room which held so many memories of his beloved Sovereign.”*

Having received a note of sympathy following the death of King George V, from Stanley Phillips, editor of *Gibbons' Stamp Monthly*, Bacon replied -

*“the severance is a bitter wrench to me”.*



Bacon's KCVO

As part of his duties in the Royal Household, he had to deal with an enormous correspondence from collectors in all parts of the world. He never used a typewriter, but wrote his replies to correspondence himself in a clear, firm hand, which is very distinctive.

Bacon described himself as “Curator of H.M. the King’s Philatelic Collection”, but on the King’s death the title of his office was changed. Bacon (and his successors) were henceforth known as “Keepers of the Royal Philatelic Collections.”

In his book *The Royal Philatelic Collection*, Sir John Wilson gave the following insights into Bacon’s character –

*“He had always been in the habit of keeping very strict accounts. These were recorded to the penny and never rounded up or down. An example of one set of stamps he sold to the King is shown in the accounts as having been charged at £283 4s. 11d. Similarly, if he bought stamps from overseas for the Collection, he marked the hinges converting the prices paid into British currency at that date, but always showing the result to the nearest penny.*

*Bacon was conservative to a degree. He had always used a large size in stamp hinges, and continued to do so all his life. When he put a stamp on a page he did so as if it were intended to remain in the same place for ever. One could level no other possible criticism against Bacon’s presentation of a collection. His script and annotations are as neat as they could be, and the latter are invariably accurate and informed.*

*When it did not make much difference to the value of a stamp if it had no margins, or was thinned, nobody paid for its improvement, but when the craze for superb condition developed, any rarity from the early collections which could be made to look perfect was treated by an expert repairer. Bacon felt that he was too old a dog to learn new tricks and would leave the detection of repair to the younger collector who had grown up with it as a constant menace.*

*He always stressed the fact that he made recommendations only and not decisions. It was the King’s Collection and the King was the final judge.*

Bacon lived at South Croydon and travelled three days a week to Buckingham Palace, catching the same trains there and back. He worked at home on the other days, studying, arranging and mounting the pages. During his many years at the Palace he always lunched alone in the Stamp Room, because his deafness caused him to be embarrassed in company. He felt, however, that in asking for his lunch to be served to him privately he caused extra trouble, and he invariably gave the footman who brought it to him one shilling. This charming little peculiarity must be unique in the history of the Household.

He never had a telephone in the Stamp Room, because of his deafness, but he was very happy with the King who had had experience with deaf people. Bacon always spoke with gratitude of the kind efforts which the King made to allow him to hear.

When the King died, Bacon’s happiness ended. By 1938, he had arranged to retire, wishing only to stay on to complete twenty-five years as a member of the Household, and to finish the mounting of all the stamps of King George V’s reign. The latter project was nearly completed, but he died three and a half months before completing the quarter century of service.”

### **Personal characteristics**

Bacon was known personally to only a comparatively small circle of leading philatelists and dealers. His position (as Curator of the King’s Collection) called for discretion, and he was discreet to a degree rare even in those who serve Kings. It was the knowledge that anything he said might be quoted as his official dictum which made him appear stiff and formal in conversation with people whom he had not tried and tested, but when he felt that he might safely be at ease, formality was laid aside and he revealed very human qualities, including a quite unexpected sense of humour.

On the other hand he could fall into an almost royal rage when the occasion seemed to him to demand it. He kept a small but absolutely irrevocable black list of those who incurred his displeasure. It was typical of the man, however, that after having forgiven somebody with whom he had cause to argue, he often ended all his business letters to that person with a more cordial salutation than he had used previously.

Edward Denny Bacon joined the Royal Automobile Club in January 1916, and remained a member until his death. Sited at 89 Pall Mall, the Club was only a short walk from Buckingham Palace and was, therefore,

very convenient for entertaining and meeting people having official business in connection with the Royal Collection. It is not recorded that Bacon had any particular interest in cars nor even whether he owned a motor vehicle, and his long association with the R.A.C. must be assumed to be simply as his using it for his London club.

### Association with Perkins, Bacon & Co

In 1920, Chas. Nissen & Co Ltd published Denny Bacon's book entitled 'The Line Engraved Postage Stamps of Great Britain printed by Perkins, Bacon & Co.' The sub-title of this work, which ran to two volumes, described its contents. This read "A History of their Production during the Forty Years – 1840 to 1880 – mainly compiled from the Records of the Firm, with the assistance of Mr James Dunbar Heath, Managing Director."

In the Foreword, Mr Heath explains that he had wanted to collaborate with Bacon in writing the book as a historical record but that pressure of business had prevented this. As a result, Denny Bacon had undertaken the task single-handed and as Mr Heath said "without his unselfish devotion, the history in the present complete form could never have been written". He went on to record –

*"It has been to him, I know, a labour of love; nevertheless, his untiring industry, extending over a period of more than ten years, merits suitable recognition from those who will reap the benefit of his labours.*

*So far as the records of the firm were concerned, no stone was left unturned, no letter or document that could be found in any way bearing on the subject left unexamined, and no fact recorded or statement made that could not be supported by evidence considered satisfactory, and in many cases information derived from other sources was obtained in corroboration and, on difficult technical questions, the opinions of our experts were always considered.*

*I think, therefore, that this historical account can be put forth without hesitation as Perkins, Bacon & Co.'s official record of their Great Britain postage stamps, written by Mr. Bacon by their express wish, and with their full authority, and while glad that my debt in this matter to philatelists is paid, I express my deep gratitude to him who has enabled me to pay it.*

*I acknowledge with loyal gratitude the appreciation of our labours by His Majesty the King, shown by his gracious permission to dedicate the history to him."*

In 1929, Bacon wrote a supplement to this work, also published by Nissen.

### Other honours and awards

Denny Bacon's pre-eminent position in the philatelic world was marked by the major organisations both home and overseas.

The Lindenberg Medal was founded by the Berlin Philatelic Club in honour of its distinguished founder, Carl Lindenberg, and it is given as a mark of distinction for those who have won special fame in Philately by scientific investigation and numerous contributions to philatelic literature. The obverse of the medal shows a portrait of Carl Lindenberg, whilst the reverse bears the inscription "For conspicuous service to Philately".

Bacon was amongst the first philatelists to be awarded this medal in 1906. When the First World War began, Bacon (together with two other eminent English collectors, M.P. Castle and E.B. Evans) renounced their awards and sent their Lindenberg Medals back, as a patriotic gesture, which caused some concern amongst philatelic circles in Germany. In 1931, however, Bacon withdrew his resignation and re-accepted the medal.

The Royal Philatelic Society elected him an Honorary Fellow in 1927, and during his lifetime he received two of their most prestigious awards for his writing. In 1921, he had been awarded the Society's Crawford Medal for his book on the line-engraved stamps of Great Britain, and in 1933 his paper on "The 1d. and 6d. Stamps of Victoria, 1863-66" brought him the Society's Tapling Medal.

Responding to the news of the latter award, Bacon wrote to the Secretary, in July 1933 -

*"Many thanks for your letter and kind congratulations.*



*The announcement that the Council of the R.P.S.L. has decided to confer the "Tapping Medal" of this year on me came as a great surprise. The news has given me very great pleasure, for I am proud to have won the medal that was founded in memory of one of my oldest and dearest philatelic friends."*

The 8th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, held in Harrogate in May 1921, saw the first signatories add their names to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. They joined the 43 former collectors, designated the 'Fathers of Philately', whose names had been inscribed posthumously in the decorative side-panels on this renowned document. To be invited to sign, and thus earn the right to use the letters 'RDP' after your name is the highest accolade that can be given to a philatelist. Bacon was amongst the initial list of 40 signatories to the Roll. In his introductory remarks about each eminent philatelist who signed the Roll that day, the Chairman of Congress said –

*"Now, ladies and gentlemen, we come to a name known throughout the world; a name I venture to say - shall we call him "The Premier Philatelist of the World?" – I refer to Mr. Edward Denny Bacon, M.V.O. - ("hear, hear," and loud applause) – and we are proud to think that this premier philatelist is a Britisher. I have permission to say that you will notice his name has already been appended to the Roll when he signed the Roll in the presence of His Majesty the King. I think, ladies and gentlemen, that is a great honour, not only for us but for the recipient; it does honour to us as philatelists and also to Mr. Bacon.*

*Our great regret is that he is not with us today. I am not going to recite to you what he has done because time would be too short. You all know better than I do what he has done for philately, and I repeat that he may be looked upon as the premier philatelist of the world."*

In 1924, Bacon became an Honorary Member of the Collectors Club of New York, one of America's leading philatelic associations.

In announcing the appointment, their official journal, *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, stated –

*"Mr. Bacon deservedly ranks as the leading philatelist of the world.*

*The Governors and members of the Collectors Club have always maintained that Honorary Membership should only be conferred for outstanding merit. Hitherto, we have only three Honorary Members: The Earl of Crawford, Charles Lathrop Pack and the late George H. Worthington. The name of E.D. Bacon will be a worthy and welcome addition to this list."*

### **Poor health**

Writing of his activities in the 1920s, many mentions about the state of his health exist, although specific details of his illnesses have not been given in any published accounts of his life. The following examples, however, indicate that he did experience much suffering –

The *British Philatelist's* obituary noted –

*"In May 1917, he was elected President [of the Royal Philatelic Society] and he filled that position until a protracted period of ill health, and the burden of numerous activities, compelled him to resign on January 26th, 1923."*

Charles J. Phillips, a close friend, wrote a biography of Bacon for the American magazine *Stamps* in 1932 in which he said -

*"He has suffered from a long and painful illness and has undergone two operations. In his resignation letter as President in 1923 he wrote that the care of the King's collection would be all the philatelic work he could undertake."*

In a note sent to the Secretary of the Royal Philatelic Society, dated 6 December 1927, his daughter wrote

*"My father thanks you for your kind letter. He much regrets that he will be unable to examine any stamps for the Expert Committee this month. He is making slow progress towards recovery."*

In his report for the Royal Philatelic Society's 1929-30 season, the Secretary stated –

*"Mr. Bacon has been prevented, by his doctor's instructions, from attending this past session's meetings,*

*except for the inaugural one, but he has taken an active part in all the Society's interests and many have been the matters referred to him for an opinion, with a consequent success."*

Sir John Wilson gave the following details of Bacon's health in his book about the Royal Collection –

*"When Bacon went first to the Palace he was somewhat deaf, and from 1921 to 1938 he was very deaf indeed.*

*The King also noted that Bacon suffered from catarrh, and considered that the thin black coat with silk facings was insufficient protection against the cold on his journeys from Croydon. On one occasion he sent for Bacon and kept him talking in his room for some time. Not long afterwards, the King's tailor delivered to Bacon a fur-lined heavy coat with an astrakhan collar. The opportunity had been taken during Bacon's absence from the Stamp Room to take the measurements of his old coat. Bacon could never recount this incident without emotion."*

On 1 January 1923, Bacon wrote a letter to the Royal , in which he said –

*"It is with very deep regret that I write to ask you to lay my resignation of President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, before the next meeting of the Council.*

*The two operations I have undergone have been successful, but I am still in a very weak state and it will probably be a good many months before I succeed in regaining my health and strength. I do not see any prospect of my being able to attend any of the remaining meetings of the Society this session .... I have had the honour now of being President for nearly six years and, as I have mentioned before to the Council, I consider this is a longer period than anyone should occupy that unique post.*

*I have also been warned by my doctors that I have been doing too much philatelic work for many years past and it is imperative that I should reduce the time I have devoted to this particular subject. The care of the King's Collection takes up a great deal more of my time than probably any Fellow of the Society is aware of, and the continual charge of His Majesty's collection will provide me practically with all the philatelic work I ought to undertake."*

His resignation as President was difficult for the Council to accept and T.W. Hall, then Vice-President, and H.R. Oldfield, the Secretary, wrote on their behalf asking Bacon to reconsider. In his response, Bacon wrote –

*"The letter in which I sent my resignation of President of the Society was, I can assure you, a painful duty, but I find the one I am now writing is still more affecting. For I feel that it is very good of the Council to ask me to reconsider my decision and that it is ungrateful of me not to fall in with their wishes, but before sending my first letter I tried to weigh very carefully all the points pro and con, and, for the reasons I have given, I much regret to say that I am compelled to ask the Council to let my resignation stand.*

*My retirement from being President does not in the least mean that I am losing interest in the Society or Philately and, after the present session, I still hope to read papers and give displays occasionally to meetings."*

## **His knighthood**

**T**he Daily Mail of 22 December 1932 carried the following story –

*"As was his custom for years, Mr. Bacon arrived at Buckingham Palace (yesterday) and devoted himself immediately to his philatelic duties.*

*A footman entered. "His Majesty wishes to see you, sir", he said.*

*Mr. Bacon told me 'I went to His Majesty thinking that he wished to discuss some new purchases, or some other matter connected with the royal stamps. We talked for a while and then the King suddenly told me that he had a surprise for me. And indeed it was a surprise when he quietly said that he intended to make me a Knight Commander of the Victorian Order.*

*We were alone in the room and the King motioned me towards a footstool near him. And there I knelt while he grasped a sword and touched me lightly on the shoulders. I could barely hear him say "Rise, Sir Edward."*

*Shortly afterwards I went back to the stamps, and for the rest of the day I hardly dared think, for I seem to have lived in a dream.*

*He reached across the table and his hand trembled slightly as he drew towards him a blue morocco case. It snapped open and he showed a Maltese Cross of frosted silver. "K.C.V.O", he murmured, "Who would have thought of that this morning?"*

*He smiled shyly as his daughter leaned forward to look at the Christmas present again.*

*“Father is really the most surprised man in the world” she said. “He could hardly tell me about it when he came home this evening.”*

All the other leading British newspapers also carried similar stories that day.

At the next meeting of the Royal, in January 1933, the following resolution was passed -



*With his daughter, Constance, looking at his KCVO*

*“The Fellows and Members of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, in General Meeting assembled, desire to tender to their Past President, Sir Edward Bacon, K.C.V.O. their hearty congratulations on the high honour bestowed on him by their Royal Patron, His Majesty the King. They welcome this as a recognition of Sir Edward Bacon’s valued services to our Patron, his long and meritorious work in philately, and in connection with the Society. In conveying these congratulations to Sir Edward Bacon the Fellows and Members express the hope that he may long continue to enjoy his well-deserved promotion in the Royal Victorian Order.”*

Bacon received so many other letters of congratulation, that he had a printed acknowledgement prepared which he sent to all who had written to him. To those whom he knew personally, he added the words “He sends his best wishes to you for 1933” in handwriting at the foot of the printed note. (see next page.)

The actual insignia of the Order that Sir Edward received is now on display in the museum at the Royal Philatelic Society, London (see page 14).

### **Family bequests**

Bacon’s son, Donald Victor, became a fruit farmer who lived at Hampton near Evesham, whilst his daughter remained in Croydon looking after her father. Neither of them married, and I have been unable to trace when, or where, they died.

Shortly after his father’s death, Donald emigrated to the USA and family letters state that he took up a position in a solicitor’s office belonging to a distant relative in the town of Kenosha in Wisconsin. [This information has not been confirmed, and may be incorrect.]

The Gables,  
Croham Park Avenue,  
South Croydon.

January, 1933.

SIR EDWARD D. BACON THANKS YOU VERY  
SINCERELY FOR YOUR CONGRATULATIONS ON  
THE NEW HONOUR THE KING HAS CONFERRED  
UPON HIM.

HE FEELS THAT IN HONOURING HIM HIS MAJESTY  
HAS BESTOWED A SIGNAL MARK ON PHILATELY.

HE REGRETS, THAT OWING TO THE MANY TELE-  
GRAMS AND LETTERS HE HAS RECEIVED IT IS  
IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO WRITE TO EACH INDIVID-  
UALLY. HE HOPES, HOWEVER, HIS FRIENDS WILL  
ACCEPT THIS AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR  
KINDNESS, WHICH HE SO MUCH APPRECIATES.

*He sends his best wishes  
you for 1933.*

*The printed acknowledgement letter*

After Denny Bacon died, his son wrote to the Royal Philatelic Society and told them that his father had said some items amongst his effects should be offered to the Society. The Secretary, L. Gilbert-Lodge, made the trip to Croydon and collected the items for safe keeping in the Royal's archives. They included a number of the medals that Sir Edward had won at various Exhibitions, his four-box index of magazine references, and miscellaneous papers, newspaper cuttings, etc. relating to philately from the turn of the century.

Soon after his death, the Council of the Royal Philatelic Society, London decided to produce a bibliography of Bacon's writings as a memorial. A draft manuscript for this bibliography had already been prepared by Bacon, and a copy of this was given to Percy de Worms, the Society's librarian to be developed into a printed version.

Nothing ever came of this, however. At the time, de Worms was heavily engaged in his book dealing with the "Perkins, Bacon Records", and was also taken seriously ill in 1939. The start of the Second World War necessitated the dispersal of much of the Society's papers from London to members' homes for safe keeping, and, then, de Worms died in April 1941. The original manuscript appears now to have been lost.

### How others saw his life

In an early interview with him originally published in *The Stamp Collector*, and reprinted in the *Philatelic Journal of India* it was reported –

*"He is not collecting anything now (1904) beyond information, there being plenty of obscure points connected with various issues that the most experienced philatelists are ready to admit will long exist and require all their energies to elucidate."*

The interviewer concluded with the comment -

*“Without appearing to use the language of exaggeration, it is difficult to fairly express the importance of the services rendered to philately by this one man, but it has been said by a competent judge that he has done more for it than any man now living.”*

Eric Glasgow, in his article in the *Stamp Lover* in April 1992 –

*“It is possible to make a good case for the proposition that Bacon was, and he still remains, the greatest British philatelist who ever lived”.*

He quoted from the obituary that appeared in *The Times* on the day following his death, which said -

*“For over half a century he had been a leader of British philately. ....But his life’s work was more than that of a dedicated philatelic student. He also served over many years as a beneficial advocate and envoy for British philately, especially for overseas visitors to London.”*

The *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain* wrote –

*“At his death, he had been connected with philately for seventy years. For most of that time he was in the front rank of philatelists, wielding an influence on the hobby that was world-wide, and attaining an eminence unparalleled in the annals of philately. Blessed with an unusually retentive memory, his vast experience and knowledge of stamps were unrivalled and his opinions commanded universal respect.”*

C.J. Phillips, in his obituary notice in *The Collectors Club Philatelist* wrote –

*“I have known Sir Edward since 1888, and I would rank him as the outstanding British Philatelist”.*

Charles Nissen, the London dealer, said the following in the obituary published in *The British Philatelist*

*“With great sorrow, we have to record the death of the greatest of all philatelists.*

*Only readers who were fortunate enough to have made his acquaintance will know to what extent philately is indebted to this kindly and generous genius”.*

His friend, Emilio Diena, wrote the following about him –

*“He was not a great talker: an expression of a contrary opinion to that held by some colleague was often limited to a shake of the head and a smile, which sufficed to stop any further discussion.*

*The day before he died, he had corrected the proofs of a most interesting article on the “tete-beche varieties of the first issue of Transvaal” [which appeared posthumously in THE LONDON PHILATELIST].*

*He considered the compilation of the Crawford catalogue as the work that gave him most pleasure.*

*Whilst working on the Crawford catalogue, Bacon took the opportunity for a holiday in Rome. He was most impressed with the city and expressed a wish to return some day - unfortunately, he never did so.”*

When he was elected as President of the Royal Philatelic Society, that journal’s editorial included the following note –

*“Mr. Edward Denny Bacon is a gentleman, whose name has long been a household word in Philately.”*

*Mr. Bacon is in his fifty-seventh year, a fact which, judging from his personal appearance and sprightly manner, would certainly require confirmation.”*

That he remained active almost to the end is clear from Nissen’s further obituary note –

*“Only ten days before his death he paid us his usual weekly visit.”*

The obituary notice from Stanley Phillips, editor of *Gibbons’ Stamp Monthly*, confirms this by saying –

*“Only a few days ago, I was congratulating Sir Edward on his return from a brief holiday looking better in health than he had done for a long time”.*

In his obituary in the June 1938 issue of THE LONDON PHILATELIST, the President, Sir John Wilson wrote –

*“His death removes from the membership list the father of the Society and its greatest benefactor of all time.*

*It was on his proposition that the Expert Committee was inaugurated on December 29th, 1893. Whilst he was compelled to resign actual membership of it in September 1926, it is no secret that he gladly gave all the assistance possible, even up to the last meeting. He greatly enjoyed attending the meetings of the Expert*

*Committee, where he was welcomed as a visitor and adviser.*

*The Catalogue of the Earl of Crawford's Library is the work of which he is justifiably most proud.*

*On Mr. Tapling's death, he was approached by the British Museum to arrange the latter's collection for display. This was a very great task and it is a happy thing that we should have this permanent record in the British Museum of his philatelic genius.*

*The Royal Collection, which consists today of approximately 350 volumes is mounted and annotated in Sir Edward's masterly style. Sir Edward was always an admirer of the fine, unused stamp which was the style of the early great collectors. Used material is only taken to provide an example of a used stamp, or in the case where the unused is not available. Sir Edward frankly cared nothing for postmarks, rates or covers. His Majesty was keen on blocks of four and on research work and plating, and Sir Edward had a masterly system of annotating his catalogue to show exactly what were the items missing from the Royal Collection.*

*He was an extremely orderly man in all his ways. He was a master of the accurate note and the filing of the note so that he could find it again.*

*Sir Edward was the first to appreciate fully the value of starting with the real facts. It was for this reason that he became 'philatelic contact man' with Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Co., and, until these records became available for inspection in the Society's hands, practically all the information on their printing was due to Sir Edward's hard work and careful search.*

*He was an exceedingly modest man and quite charming in discussion, agreement or difference. He had wonderful eyes and a great colour sense, and he was exceedingly quick in telling at first glance if a stamp had been cleaned, but he disliked very much forming conclusions on whether stamps were repaired or not.*

*For many years he had been able to pay one visit a season to the Society's meetings; this was solely due to the fact that his deafness prevented him from being able to follow the proceedings with any ease."*

## **Conclusion**

On Monday, 29 May, he had been at Buckingham Palace as usual, and returned home to Croydon. On the Wednesday he felt far from well, and by Friday grave symptoms of pneumonia had developed. On Sunday, 5 June 1938 at 6.30 a.m. he passed peacefully away in his sleep.

For the efforts he expended on the Tapling, Duveen, Crawford and Royal collections, for his contributions to philatelic literature from his own pen, plus his work on the Crawford catalogue and for the Philatelic Literature Society, and for his devoted services to the Royal Philatelic Society London, Sir Edward Denny Bacon certainly fully earned the accolade of "Our National Philatelist".

## **APPENDIX: His last will**

I, Sir Edward Denny Bacon, K.C.V.O., of The Gables, 12 Croham Park Avenue, South Croydon in the County of Surrey, Gentleman, hereby revoke all former Wills, Codicils, and Testamentary Dispositions made by me and declare this to be my Last Will. I appoint my son, Donald Victor Bacon, and my brother, Arthur John Bacon of Glenthorne, Claverton Down, Bath in the County of Somerset to be Executors of this my Will, and Trustees for the purposes hereinafter mentioned.

I wish my body to be buried in the plot of ground belonging to me in the London Necropolis Company's Cemetery at Brookwood, Woking.

I give and bequeath to each of my two children, Donald Victor and Beatrice Olive Constance, the legacy of four hundred pounds apiece, free of duty, to be paid immediately after my death. I devise and bequeath all the residue of my real and personal estate, and effects of every description, unto and to the use of my said son, Donald Victor Bacon, and my brother, the said Arthur John Bacon, their heirs, executors and administrators respectively. Upon Trust that they, the said Donald Victor Bacon and Arthur John Bacon, or the survivor of them, or the executors or administrators of such survivor, their or his assigns (all of whom are hereinafter referred to as "my Trustees") shall sell, call in and convert into money, the said estate and premises at such times and in such manner as they shall think fit.

Provided always, and I declare that my Trustees may postpone the sale and conversion of all or any part or parts of my said estate and effects respectively, and may retain any existing investments (including leaseholds or other property of a terminable or wasting nature) so long as they shall deem proper, and shall

out of the moneys to arise from such sale, calling in and conversion, and out of my ready money, pay all my debts, funeral expenses and legacies and shall stand possessed of the residue of the said moneys and the investments representing or constituting my said Estate and the income thereof as to one equal half part thereof and the income thereof in Trust to pay or transfer the same to my son, Donald Victor Bacon, absolutely.

And, as to the other equal half part thereof, and the income thereof upon Trust, to pay such income to my said daughter, Beatrice Olive Constance, during her life, without power of anticipation during coverture and, after her death, as to both capital and income, in Trust for such one or more exclusively of the other or others of the children or child of my said daughter in such shares and proportions and in such manner as my daughter shall, whether covert or sole, by Deed or Will direct or appoint and in default of, and subject to any such direction or appointment, in Trust for all or any the children or child of my said Daughter who may attain the age of twenty-one years, and if more than one in equal shares.

And, if there shall be no such child of my said daughter as aforesaid, upon Trust for such person or persons, and generally in such manner as my said daughter shall, whether covert or sole, by Deed, Will or codicil appoint, and in default of such appointment and subject thereto, then in Trust for the statutory next of kin of my said daughter, as if she had not been married. And I declare that the power of appointing new Trustees or a new Trustee of this Will shall be exercisable by my said daughter during her lifetime, and that in case any Trustee shall die or resign or become incapable to act in the Trusts hereof a new Trustee or Trustees shall be appointed as soon as conveniently may be: it being my desire that there shall not at any time be less than two Trustees.

In witness whereof I, the above named Sir Edward Denny Bacon, have to this my will set my hand this twentieth day of December, one thousand nine hundred and thirty four.

(Signed) E. D. Bacon

Signed by the above named, Sir Edward Denny Bacon, the Testator, as and for his last Will in the presence of us both present at the same time, who, in his presence and in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses:

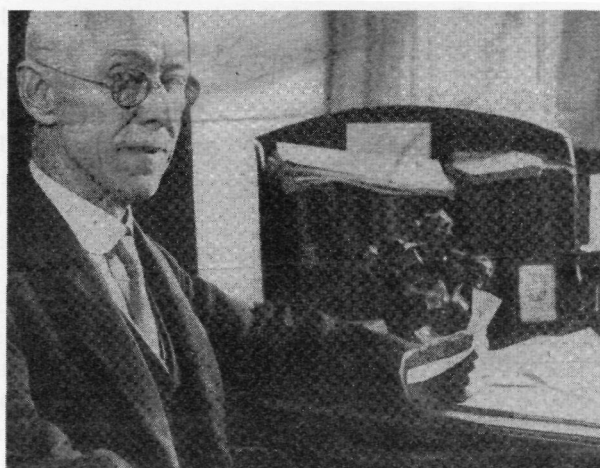
Winifred Edith Brown, 18 Croham Park Avenue, South Croydon

George Ambrose Brown, 18 Croham Park Avenue, South Croydon

Sir Edward's estate recorded in the Probate Records amounted to just under £27,250 (at 1938 prices), which would equate to approximately £730,000 in today's value.

**Sources used:**

- Anon., Editorial interview, *The Philatelic Record*, vol.13 (Dec 1891) p.281  
 Anon., Honour for Croydon Philatelist, *Croydon Advertiser* (24 Dec 1932)  
 Anon., Obituary notice, *Croydon Advertiser* (10 Jun 1938)  
 Anon., Our New President, *LONDON PHILATELIST*, vol. 26 (May 1917) p.100  
 Anon., Philatelists of Today, *Stamp Collectors Fortnightly*, vol.18 (11 May 1912) p.61  
 Anon., The King knights his stamp expert *Daily Mail* (22 Dec 1932)  
 Anon., Visit to the Tapling Collection, *LONDON PHILATELIST*, vol.15 (May 1906) p.128  
 Anon., *Royal Philatelic Society 1869-1969*, the Society, London, 1969  
 Bierman, Dr. Stanley M., *The World's Greatest Stamp Collectors*, Linn's, Ohio, 1990  
 British Library: Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection Accounts 1892-1899  
 Butler, A. Ronald, *The Expert Committee 1894-1994*, the Society, London, 1994  
 De Worms, Percy, *Royal Philatelic Society 1869-1919*, the Society, London, 1919  
 General Register Office, Birth, death and marriage certificates of Bacon and family  
 General Register Office, Census returns for Ilford – 1881 and 1891  
 Gilbert-Lodge, L., Annual Report for 1929-30, *LONDON PHILATELIST*, vol. 39 (Jun 1930) p.122  
 Glasgow, Eric, Sir Edward Bacon, *The Stamp Lover*, vol.84 (Apr 1992) p.46  
 Holmes, H.R., Death of Sir E.D. Bacon, *Philatelic Journal of G.B.*, vol.48 (Jun 1938) p.93  
 Lowe, Robson, Philatelic Personalities, *LONDON PHILATELIST*, vol.102 (Dec 1993) p.351  
 Mackay, James A., This is your collection, *Stamp Magazine*, (May 1963) p.273  
 Melville, Fred J., Obituary notice, *The Stamp Lover*, (Jun 1938) p.3  
 Melville, Fred J., Philatelic Personalities & obituary, *Stamp Magazine*, (Jul 1938) p.8  
 Nankivell, E.J., Mr. E.D. Bacon, *The Philatelic Record*, vol.19 (Jan 1897) p.11  
 Nissen, Charles, Obituary notice, *The British Philatelist*, vol.31 (Jun 1938) p.28  
 Phillips, Chas. J., Edward Denny Bacon, *Stamps (USA)*, vol.1 (15 Oct 1932) p.153  
 Phillips, Chas. J., *The Duveen Collection*, New York, 1922, p.4  
 Phillips, Stanley, Edward Denny Bacon, *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, vol.11 (Jul 1938) p.185  
 Royal Philatelic Society archives – various papers and original correspondence 1880-1938  
 Tasker, George, *Ilford: Past and Present* [1901], Redbridge Libraries reprint, 1992, p.95  
 Vallancey, F. Hugh, *Catalogue of the Bacon Library*, Vallancey Press, London, 1939, p.3  
 Wilson, Sir John, Obituary notice, *LONDON PHILATELIST*, vol.47 (Jun 1938) p.141  
 Wilson, Sir John, The Royal Philatelic Collection, *Stamp Collecting*, (29 Nov 1963) p.467



*Sir Edward at his desk in Buckingham Palace*



### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks are due to David Beech, Head of the Philatelic Collections, British Library, for making corrections to the drafts of this booklet and drawing my attention to some errors I had made in regard to Bacon's work with the Tapling Collection in earlier versions of the manuscript. Also for providing the photographs on pages 5 and 10 from The British Library, Philatelic Collections.

My thanks, also, to my brother, James, for his editorial assistance, which has greatly improved the presentation for this latest version. And to Clem Olliver for the photograph which appears on page 14.

Any remaining errors in the text are of my own making and I take full responsibility for them.

R.N.