

# Tunbridge Ware Stamp Box Makers

## Introduction

We have had a very good article explaining **HOW** Tunbridge Ware boxes are made for some time, simply titled, "Tunbridge Ware".

What follows is an article setting out what is known about **WHO** made them.

For this we have to thank the leading Tunbridge Ware dealers **Amherst Antiques**.

On their website (<http://www.tunbridgeware.org>) you will find an excellent selection of Tunbridge Ware items including, in the *Desk Accessories* section, many stamp boxes.

[webmaster@stampbox.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@stampbox.org.uk)

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# Notes on Tunbridge Ware Stamp Boxes & Their Makers

Tunbridge Ware stamp boxes were produced post 1840 during the reigns of six monarchs but few have labels or any other identifying marks to associate them with specific makers.

Victoria	1837 - 1901
Edward VII	1901 - 1910
George V	1910 - 1936
Edward VIII	1936
George VI	1936 - 1952
Elizabeth II	1952 -

## Tunbridge Ware Makers

### The Burrows Family

Active from the 18<sup>th</sup> century - 1883

James Burrows is credited with the development of miniature parquetry in the 1820's.

It is likely that the Burrows family were responsible for adapting circular snuffboxes to stamps boxes by applying stamps to the lid.

No labelled examples are known.



### Edmund Nye

Active from circa 1818 - 1863

Nye is likely to have made single and triple stamp boxes from the late 1840's. These were inlaid with miniature parquetry designs, with cut down Penny Red stamps applied. A number of labelled examples exist.





Many of Nye's designs, both with and without applied stamps, were based on star motifs.



Stamp boxes with applied facsimile stamps are also thought to be by Nye. Please note facsimile stamps were printed with Postage Stamps but with no denomination.



Examples of Edmund Nye stamp boxes with labels.

Left: An unusually large stamp box with a 1d receipt stamp applied. 5.5cm wide Circa 1850

Right: A stamp box with a star motif and an ink stamp mark. Circa 1855

### Thomas Barton

Active in own right from 1863 – 1903.  
(Formerly employee of Edmund Nye)

Barton continued using star motifs, which had featured on stamp boxes made by Nye.





Barton favoured green oak as a veneer and used it to good effect on his stamp boxes as well as on larger items.

Green or diseased oak, attacked by the fungus *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, was used in Tunbridge Ware from the 1840's. Edmund Nye is credited with its introduction.



Thomas Barton labelled a number of his stamp boxes, either with paper labels or ink stamps. The above examples both date from the 1870's and have ink stamp marks.

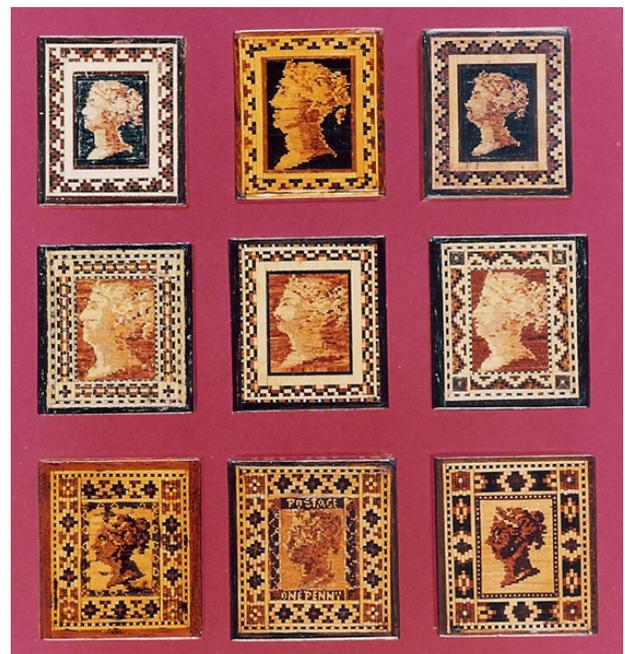
The box on the left is the only version by Barton of Queen Victoria's head in tessellated mosaic. The box on the right has a Postage & Revenue half penny stamp applied.

### Henry Hollamby

Active from circa 1831 - 1891

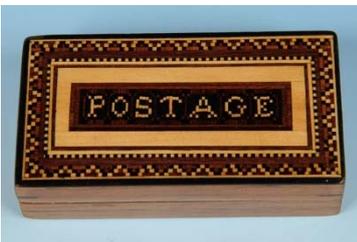
Henry Hollamby was primarily a wholesaler and no stamp boxes with Hollamby labels are known.

It is likely that Hollamby produced the majority of the boxes with Queen Victoria's head in mosaic.

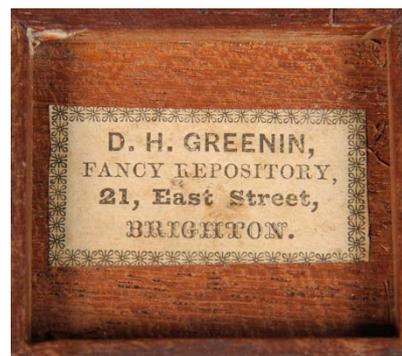




On rare occasions errors were made on stamp boxes with the Queen's head in mosaic, where the image was laid in reverse and the Queen faces to the right. To read more about this please see Amherst Antique's blog, *Eyes to the Right* <http://www.tunbridgeware.org/p/blog/id/2612>



Hollamby is thought to have introduced boxes with lettering in mosaic. This technique was also used by other makers, such as Boyce, Brown & Kemp.



Stamp boxes also occur with retailer's labels. These are likely to have been supplied by Henry Hollamby. Known examples are S. Tester, Smithfield St., Coventry & Sulman, Stockwell St., Greenwich.

The example illustrated above is for D H Greenin, Fancy Repository, 21 East St., Brighton Circa 1850

For more information on known Tunbridge Ware retailers please see *Tunbridge Ware & Related European Decorative Woodwares* by Brian Austen Appendix 4.

The Wise Family  
Active until 1876.

No identifiable stamp boxes known.

Boyce, Brown & Kemp  
Active from circa 1873 - 1917.

Boyce, Brown & Kemp continued many of Hollamby's designs and were probably responsible for many of the stamp boxes with lettering in mosaic.

They rarely labelled their work and no labelled stamp boxes are known.

Boyce, Brown & Kemp are probably responsible for many boxes with small cubes and floral motifs. They also tended to make novelty items such as this stamp box in the shape of a book.

They also made stamp boxes with postage stamps applied such as this Edward VII box with a half penny stamp.

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century facsimile stamps were no longer in use.



Tunbridge Wells Manufacturing Company  
Active 1924 - 1927

The Tunbridge Wells Manufacturing Company continued producing stamp boxes similar to those of Boyce, Brown & Kemp with floral & geometric inlay.

Some labelled examples exist. The labels are all ink stamps.



Thomas Littleton Green

Active in Rye, East Sussex 1931 – 1939

Thomas Littleton Green produced stamp boxes for the anticipated coronation of Edward VIII in 1937.

Some of his boxes have distinctive vertical tongue corner joints, which are a useful guide to identification.

He is also associated with the “Three Kings” box featuring George V, Edward VIII & George VI

The box to commemorate the coronation of George VI in 1937 is attributed to Green but has marked similarities with the work of Alfred Botten. (See below)



Alfred Botten

Died 1963

Alfred Botten was employed by The Tunbridge Wells Manufacturing Company and continued producing Tunbridge Ware in his own right after the company closed.

He is known to have produced the box to commemorate the Festival of Britain in 1951. This box is very similar in style to the 1937 coronation box above.



Len Garrett

Working in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Len Garrett also made a stamp box commemorating the coronation of George VI

His work is marked with a monogram.



Peter Benjamin

Still active.

Produced millennium stamp box in 2000



Some Examples of Single & Double Width Stamp Boxes with Pictorial Images

From the 1870's stamp boxes were also produced in Tunbridge Ware with pictorial images. These were likely to have been made by Henry Hollamby and subsequent makers.

