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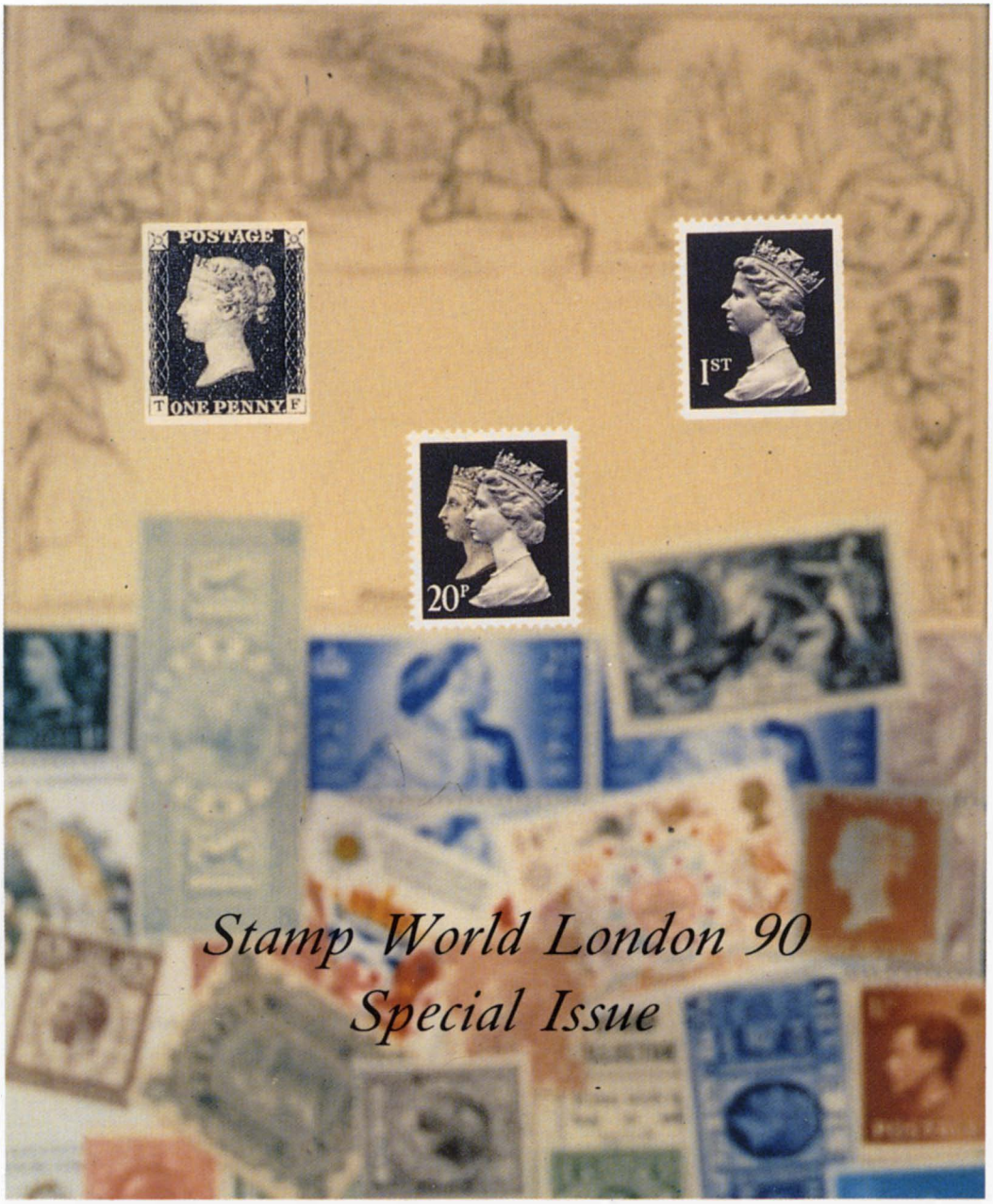

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THE GREAT BRITAIN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

This year sees the Great Britain Philatelic Society celebrating its 45th anniversary. It was in November 1955 that a notice appeared in some thirty philatelic publications in sixteen countries across the world announcing the inaugural meeting of what was proposed to be called a Great Britain Specialist Society. The meeting was duly held, on Saturday 3 December 1955, at the Royal Philatelic Society, London under the interim chairmanship of Major Beaumont, president of the RPSL.

The meeting, which was the brain-child of the late Mr R.A.G. Lee, was attended by 48 persons who included many prominent philatelists and philatelic journalists. Twenty-eight of them enrolled in the society at that inaugural session, which also elected the Society's council and officers: R.A.G. Lee as hon. secretary; R.F. Strange as hon. treasurer; and K. Chapman, Dr B.S. Jay, Capt. B. Rogers-Tillstone, C.G. Shaw, Lt Col. Stanton and E. Troy as council members. It also decided to formally accept its name as the Great Britain Philatelic Society.

The GBPS held its first formal meeting a month later, on 4 January 1956 and elected Lt. Col. Stanton as chairman. It established an Editorial Committee consisting of R.A.G. Lee, K. Chapman and J.W. Mills to draft the Society's constitution.

Within ten days, the first Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 14 January 1956 at Church House, Westminster, to approve the proposed constitution and to elect the Society's first term officers. Maj. K.M. Beaumont was elected as president. Among other decisions were the formation of a catalogue sub-committee and preparation of an annual programme.

Ever since its formation, the GBPS has benefitted from the enthusiastic support and assistance of prominent G.B. philatelists of world renown, who have devoted decades to its continued growth. Most of them rose to serve as the Society president. Amongst them were the late Mr R.A.G. Lee, Dr A. K. Huggins, Maj. Gen. Sir Leonard Atkinson, J.O. Griffiths, Dr D. Latto, Mr F. Stott, and the late Harold Fisher.

Today, the GBPS has a membership of around 750, spread all over the world, though understandably most of it in the UK. Its publication. the GB Journal has won many national and international awards and is the main link among all members. Most of the Society's meetings are held in London at 107 Charterhouse Street, EC1, but it does hold a few meetings in the provinces and, also, its members attend other provincial societies.

Through its publications and meetings, the GBPS has promoted many aspects of GB philately and has pioneered study and research in a number of fields. Its members have published definitive books as well as monograms, papers and articles, on almost all aspects of GB. Amongst the most notable ones are the definitive books on Postal Stationery by Dr A.K. Huggins, the Plating of the Penny by Roland Brown, the Plating of the QV Half Penny by G.C. Akerman, and the Specimen Stamps & Stationery of Great Britain by Marcus Samuel and A.K. Huggins. Currently it is publishing in serialised form a definitive work on British Stamp Booklets by Jean Alexander and Leonard F. Newbery.

The Society has also played a pioneering role in the development and promotion of Postal History, and the collection of Fiscal Stamps; as well as in the difficult task of plating the early low value issues of Queen Victoria, the One Penny (both Black and Red) and the Half Penny. Such work has become the main reference source for GB philatelists.

POSTAL HISTORY — BEFORE 1840

When man first learned to turn the spoken word into the written word direct communications, over a long distance, was made possible, and thus Postal History was born.

In the 3rd Millenium BC, the Sumerians were sending letters far and wide. The British Museum has a very large number of these letters. They were, of course, written on clay. It is said that the Incas, by using runners, could send a letter up to 1,000 miles in 10 days. Post houses were a quarter of a league apart which '...was how far an Indian could run, at speed, and in breath, and without being tired'. The vast country of China also had a system of post houses, from a very early time, and, once again their letters were sent by runners.

A Royal Postal Service must have started at a very early date in Great Britain. This was for official and Court letters, but, in addition, and on the side, private letters were also carried by the post boys. This is evidenced by such correspondence as the Paston letters of the 15th century, and the recently discovered letters of the Corsini family in the 16th century.

It must have been known that post boys were carrying private letters, as, in 1584 Articles were drawn up by John Thomas Randolph, Master of the Posts, which stated that packets for Her Majesty's affairs must be delivered before private packets, and on no account was a post boy to deviate from his route to deliver private mail. Penalty was a fine of 10/- and the displeasure of the Master of the Posts.

It was not until 1635, considered to be the date of the formation of today's Postal Service, that the Royal Post was opened to the public. The rate, which could be paid or unpaid, was 2d for up to 80 miles, and 4d up to 140 miles. Letters at this time were not only charged in accordance with the distance travelled but also by the number of sheets used for the letter. The basic charge was for a one sheet letter, and this was increased double or treble according to the number of sheets used.

The first main change in the post was made in 1661 when Charles II appointed Henry Bishop as Postmaster General. He produced the first dated postmark, the so-called Bishop Mark. This only showed the day and the month when the letter was received at the Head Office in London. It was not until 1787 that the year was also incorporated. These marks were first used in London; by 1670 they had started to be used in Dublin, and in Edinburgh in 1693. They were also used in one or two places in the Commonwealth. In 1680 a local post was started in London by William Dockwra, Robert Murray, and Dr Hugh Chamberlain. Letters could be left at Receiving Houses, it is claimed that there were hundreds of these in the London area, and for 1d they could be delivered, 'within the bills of mortality, and outside that area up to a ten mile radius of the City to the local office, from which they had to be collected or they could be delivered for an extra 1d, usually paid to the deliverer of the letter. This service was a success, but the Post Office considered that it was an infringement of their monopoly and it was closed down in November 1682. However, it was opened again, by the Post Office, in December of the same year. The mark used by both Dockwra and the Post Office was a triangular mark which gave a letter for the office, and two letters for the day of the week but no date.

These marks continued to be used right through until 1794 when there was a reorganisation of the postal service. Both the Penny Post, and the General Post were affected by this reorganisation but they still continued to use different post marks. This running in tandem continued until the middle of the 19th century. In the Provinces the Post Towns had their own marks, to start with just straight lined names of the town, often with a mileage to London shown underneath. These were used from very early on in the 18th century. Many variations are known of these marks, especially those for Stockport, and they continued in use until the middle of the 19th century. Scotland and Ireland both had their own marks, which, in some cases were more elaborate than those used in England.

In 1801 local postmasters were given the right to institute local Penny Posts, by the Postage Act 41 George III Cap 7. The 5th Clause of this Act gave its name to the well known Fifth Clause Postmarks. These marks are known used from 1816, but the majority are found from about 1820 to 1840.

From the early days the mail had been carried by 'Post Boys' mounted on horses. John Bunyan in 1686 wrote 'Behold the Post Boy, with what haste and speed.../He travels on the Road and there is need../That he so does, his Business calls for haste'. But in 1784 John Palmer started a Mail Coach service from Bristol to London which did the journey in about 16 hours. This speeded up the mail considerably and sounded the death knell of the Post Boy. It is interesting to find that even in 1797 mail was carried from London to Edinburgh in three days.

(continued on page 56)

POSTAL REFORMS AND BIRTH OF THE POSTAGE STAMP

January 10th 1840 saw the culmination of Rowland Hill's reforms which had started as a pamphlet in January 1837. On that day, the Uniform Penny Postage was introduced and letters could be sent throughout the Kingdom for the same charge, only being affected by weight. The distance the letter travelled was no longer of any consequence, except to the sender and the recipient.

The pamphlet recommended the introduction of a uniform rate of one penny on pre-paid letters, regardless of the distance travelled. It was inherent in Hill's plan that some incentive should be given to pay the postage rate on posting rather than on delivery. Hill, himself, had wanted pre-payment to be obligatory, but this the Post Office would not accept and he was forced to settle for a fine of double the rate for unpaid letters.

At the same time, the local Penny Posts were to be abolished, as was the Free Franking privilege which was enjoyed by members of both the Houses of Parliament. In July 1839, the proposals passed all stages in the House of Commons and received the Royal assent in August.

In his original pamphlet, Hill had not mentioned stamps, nor had he been specific about the method of prepayment and how it should be indicated. In February 1838, James Chalmers of Dundee produced the world's first postage stamp essays which he called 'slips'. These were incorporated into Hill's later proposals.

Hill had believed that envelopes and wrappers would be easier to use and more popular with the public than stamps. He also planned for their introduction when the Uniform Penny Post came into operation. However, there was just not enough time. Once the Act received the Royal assent, there was public pressure for its implementation at the earliest possible moment. The Government was loath to introduce the Uniform Penny rate immediately and compromised with a Uniform Fourpenny Post which began on 5 December 1839. The public would not be denied and further agitation brought about the full terms of the Reform on 10 January 1940.

There was no possibility of the stamps or envelopes being ready in such a short time. On 6 September 1839, the Treasury had invited proposals from the public as to the methods for prepayment of postage and offered prizes for the most successful. This competition did not close until 15 October. In general, none of the entries were suitable, but Hill was able to make good use of some of the ideas - the use of watermarked paper; the use of the Sovereign's Head, suggested by both Wyon and Cheverton (one of the prize winners); and the use of an elaborate security background. Initially two prizes of £200 and £100 were offered but, after consideration four prizes of £100 were awarded to Cheverton, Whiting, Cole and Bogardus and Coffin jointly.

Hill was authorised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Francis Baring, to commence the preparation of the stamp designs on 11 December 1839 and Perkins Bacon were given instructions to prepare a die on 31 December. The engravers entrusted with the task were Charles and Frederick Heath using the Queen's head that Henry Corbould had drawn from William Wyon's 1837 City Medal. The first die was unacceptable, but a second die produced on 20 February 1840 was approved. The Master Die was completed on 31 March and the first proof sheet was approved by Baring on 2 April. Printing began on 16 April for delivery to all Post Offices for the Penny Black to go on sale on 1 May 1840. Each sheet bearing 240 impressions in 20 rows of 12 stamps. This arrangement remained virtually unaltered for all the line-engraved issues, except the 1/2d, over the next forty years.

The Mulready envelopes were to have been ready sooner. Mulready had completed his design on 16 December 1839, but the engraving of the die by J Thompson, who was commissioned on 6 January, was not complete until 1 April 1840 (perhaps the date is significant!). Mulready proofs were shown to the Queen on 3 April and printing began on the 15th. The printer in this case was Clowes, a small firm, which was sited in London but moved to Suffolk after the Second World War.

On 1 May 1840, the Penny Black and the Mulreadies went on sale to the public. This was intended to ensure that the stamps and covers were well distributed before they became valid for postage on the 6th. Some items were inevitably used before the due date, perhaps the best being the 2 May covers from Bath.

The Penny Black: Plates 1 and 2 were ready for printing in April and both were available on the first

day. As Plate 1 was put to press without hardening, it wore rapidly. Early impressions are known as Plate 1a. The plate was withdrawn and repairs carried out by re-entry. The revised Plate 1b is first known postally used on 12 June.

Plate 3 was put to press on 12 May; Plate 4 on about 20 May; Plate 5 on 28 May; Plate 6 on 15 June; Plate 7 on 26 June; Plate 8 on 3 July; Plate 9 in early November; Plate 10 on 8 December and, finally, Plate 11 was originally registered as a Penny Red on 27 January 1841, but 700 sheets were printed in black on 1 and 2 February 1841.

The change to Red: Rowland Hill visited the printers on 16 April 1840 and received some samples for trial cancellation. It was quickly found that the red ink which was to be used for cancellation of the Penny Black was easily removed with chemicals. The formulation of the ink was changed and a new notice with the recipe was sent to all Postmasters on 25 April.

Hill carried out further trials but as soon as the stamps were issued various means to enable the stamps to be reused were attempted. Obviously this could not be allowed to continue and Hill personally delayed orders for the stamps so that the minimum were in the post offices at any one time. This hand to mouth existence led to further problems early in 1841.

Between May and December much of Hill's time was spent on trying to resolve the problems of inks with which the stamps were printed and the ink to be used for obliteration. The second of these was the simpler to solve and it was quickly decided that the cancellations should be black instead of red.
The printing ink was more difficult and the 'Rainbow' trials commenced, using a special plate of twelve stamps. Hill submitted two reports on 17 September and 18 November, but it was not until 19 December that the red and modified blue inks were finally agreed. Perkins Bacon were instructed to print no more black stamps.

In late December, printing of the Penny Red began, but Hill found that there were not enough stamps in circulation and that some of the ingredients for the black cancellation ink were not available. Further printings of the Penny Black took place between 21 January and 3 February. The Penny Red was issued on 10 February 1841.

The Twopence Blue: This value was printed from two plates. The first of these, Plate 1, began printing on 2 May 1840 and the stamps were on sale in London on 8 May. Earlier dates exist but these probably came from the small plate which was used to print examples which were sent to Postmasters.

Plate 2 was put to press in July 1840 and the first used examples are dated 18 August. As with the Penny Black, the Twopence Blue was subject to the 'Rainbow' trials. Although the blue colour was retained, it was altered in formulation and the design was modified to include a 'white line' above the value tablet. This was issued in March 1841.

The Mulreadies: The Mulreadies appeared in four forms - one penny and two penny envelopes and wrappers. These were all available on 1 May for sale to the public and, as with the adhesives, they became valid for postage on 6 May 1840. They were greeted with derision by the public and caricatures had begun to appear before the end of May. Hill, himself, wrote on 12 May in his diary: "I fear we shall be obliged to substitute some other stamp for that designed by Mulready, which is abused and ridiculed on all sides.."

Work was put in hand and, in late January 1841, a penny envelope with an embossed impression was issued. this was followed in April by the twopence envelope. There were about 25 million of the Mulreadies printed and, in the end, special stoves had to be designed to burn the unsold envelopes and wrappers.

Although the Mulready had such a short, ill-fated life both the envelopes and wrappers and subsequently, the caricatures have established themselves as one of the hobby's leading collectables.

So ended the first phase of the philatelic history of the United Kingdom. The first stamps had been issued and the first postal stationery had been released. Neither were a perfect success, but the design for the stamps held good for forty years. No design since has had so long a life (except the Postage Due which hardly qualifies), though the Machin Head of today, which contains some of the classic traditions of the Penny Black, seems likely to reach that total, unless there is a major change in the next 18 years!

However, the effects of the Reforms were immediate and far reaching. The volume of letters carried by the Post Office which had been fairly static at some 60 million per year in England and Wales quickly rose and, by 1860, was 462 million. Even in the first year it reached 132 million.

There is no doubt that Hill's reforms had a beneficial and lasting effect on commerce, education and normal family correspondence.

LINE ENGRAVED 1841-80

After the 'Rainbow' trials, decisions were taken to change the 1d value from black to red. This was because the only truly fugitive inks available were red and blue, so the Twopence was left in the same basic colour, but there was a modification to the design. Both the revised adhesives were issued early in 1841, the 1d on 10 February and the 2d in mid-March.

Between these dates and 1880, when Perkins Bacon lost the contract for printing values up to 2d to De La Rue, there were many changes in the stamps, but the basic designs and colours remained the same.

Alphabets: For security reasons, the original plates were laid down with corner letters. This made each stamp in the sheet unique. As time progressed, the punches used for striking these letters were changed over the years to slightly different but recognisable fonts. These are known as the Alphabets and four different ones are recorded:

Alphabet I - this has smaller letters and was used on plates made from 1841 to the end of 1851.
Alphabet II - has slightly larger and heavier letters. It was introduced on 6 February 1852 and was replaced by Alphabet III in August 1855.
Alphabet III - this is taller and generally thinner than the other types. It was used from 18 August 1855 until the introduction of the four corner letters.
Alphabet IV - this was a short lived experiment with corner letters engraved. It was only used in 1861.

The dates given are not finite as some of the Reserve plates were put to press after the dates of change for the alphabets.

In 1858, the 2d changed to four corner letters in a totally different sans-serif font, but this alteration was not incorporated in the 1d value until 1 April 1861.

Watermarks: These varied during the life of the series. The original Small Crown watermark was used from 1841 to 1856 when the Large Crown was introduced. During the period of the Large Crown watermark, a number of the 'bits' fell off the 'dandy' roll and were replaced by new pieces which were slightly different. These are found on some plates with stamps TA and MA. This is known as type I.

In March 1861, the Large Crown watermark was modified by the removal of two vertical pieces from each 'bit'. This modification produced type II. In the later values, the 1½d used the Large Crown watermark, type II, but the ½d had a unique watermark which read 'halfpenny' in script across three stamps.

Perforation: When stamps were first issued, there were no perforations and the stamps were cut with scissors either by the postal clerk or, subsequently, by the purchaser.

Trials by Henry Archer to find a means of mechanical separation began as a roulette in 1848. This was superseded by a trial perforation machine which Archer developed and trials began in 1850.

In 1853, the Government took over the experiments and eventually perforated stamps with perf. 16 were issued on 28 January 1854. Further experiments with perf. 14 began in the same year and both gauges were used concurrently until the Post Office settled on perf. 14 in mid-1855.

Dies: The original Die I which had been laid down for the Penny Black was used on all plates up to 1855. In that year, a retouched die was brought into use and all 1d sheets after that date were laid down from the new die. The Twopence did not use the new die until it was introduced on the 'four corner letter' design in 1858.

The Penny Red - Details and Plates: When the first decision was taken to change the Penny value from black to red, some initial printings were taken from the Penny Black plates in the new colour. Plates 1b, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are all recorded and can be found in matched pairs with the Penny Black equivalent. The first Penny Red stamps were issued on 10 February 1841, and the red printing from the old plates were used until March of that year. The first Penny Red plate 12 was registered on 25 February 1841; this was Die I, Alphabet I and imperforate. This format continued until 1852 and included plates up to 131. The number of the plate was not included in the design until the introduction of the 'four corner letters' in 1861. The stamps need careful study for the establishment of the correct plate number.

The second stage began in February 1852 which continued with Die I but changed to Alphabet II. This was used on plates 132 to 177. This stage was used until 1853 when perforations were introduced.

Stage 3 was Die I, Alphabet II and perforated 14 or 16. This existed on plates 155-204 and on Reserve plates 1 to 6. It was introduced in February 1854 and continued until 1855.

Stage 4 saw the introduction of Die II and a new series of plate numbers were introduced. Plates 1 - 21 were used from February to August 1855 and these showed Alphabet II.

Stage 5 followed with the change to Alphabet III and plates 22 to 27 which still had the original Small Crown watermark.

Stage 6 shows the change of watermark to Large Crown and applies to plates 22 to 49. It will be noted that some plates exist with both watermarks.

Stage 7 has a change in paper when, in 1857, it was altered from the standard bluish paper to a yellowish and then to a cream toned effect. This was short lived and the blue toned paper which had been used was replaced by a white paper. This stage was Die II, Alphabet III, watermark Large Crown type I, similar to stage 6 except for the colour of the paper. It was used for plates 23 to 68 and Reserve plate 16.

Stage 8 was the 1861 experimental printing of plates 50 and 51 with Alphabet IV and watermark Large Crown type II. From 1861, the penny value was printed with four corner letters.

Twopence Blue - Details and Plates: The stamps printed from the redesigned Twopence plate were issued on 13 March 1841 from plate 3. This was Die I (as were all the 2d values until 1859), Alphabet I watermark Small Crown and imperforate. It was followed in December 1849 by plate 4 and, initially, it had the same characteristics. However, plate 4 is the only Twopence plate which exists both perforate and imperforate. Perforated stamps were issued in March 1854 (perf. 16) and February 1855 (perf. 14). In July 1855, plate 5 was issued, This was Die I, Alphabet II and, again, it exists with both perforations. It was during the life of this plate that the watermark changed to Large Crown and this was also issued with both perforations in 1855. Plate 6 was released on 2 July 1857 with Die I and Alphabet III. It was issued in both perforations with perf. 16 being released in February 1858. This was the last plate before the change to four corner letters in 1858.

Four Corner Letters: From the beginning, the use of corner letters had been intended to prevent the re-use of stamps when they were not properly cancelled. By the late 1850s, it was decided that the situation had become sufficiently serious to warrant a further change in design. When the Uniform Postage was introduced in 1839-40, the annual volume of mail had been some 60 million letters. By 1855, this figure had increased to 443 million. This growth led to the need to cancel letters mechanically and this, in turn, meant that the letters were no longer individually inspected to the same standard. Thus it became possible to frank a letter with two uncancelled halves of cancelled stamps and defraud the Post Office.

Penny Red: Issued in April 1864, this was used on plates 71 to 225 with the plate engraved in the design of the stamp. It was a completely new alphabet, perf.14 and watermark Large Crown type II.

Twopence Blue: Issued in July 1858 on plate 7. Until the design of the Twopence was changed in 1869, plates 8, 9 and 12 were also issued. Plates 7 to 9 used watermark Large Crown type I and plate 12 used type II. There was also a small number of plate 9 printed on the type II watermark. All of these had a thick white line between the value tablet and the Queen's Head. In July 1869, the line between the tablet and the Queen's Head was made thinner. This change was implemented with plate 13 and was used for plates 14 and 15 as well. As with the Penny value, the plate number was inscribed in the design.

Three Halfpence: Originally prepared for issue in 1860, the change in postage rate for which it was intended was not implemented and it was never issued. This was printed on watermark Large Crown type I on blued paper. It was printed from plate 1.

In 1870, the changes in the postage rates required both a halfpenny and a three halfpence adhesive and they were both issued on 1 October 1870. The three halfpence was printed on white paper with watermark Large Crown type II from plate 3 and more rarely from the original plate 1.

Halfpenny: Introduced on the same day as the three halfpence, this value was necessary for the new printed paper rate. It was designed much smaller than the other values and was printed in sheets of 480. There were twenty plates issued in all over the ten year period and the scarcest of these is plate 9.

The reasons for the change from Line Engraved to Surface Printing is discussed in the next section. However, after forty years, Perkins Bacon lost the contract for the low values in 1880 and never printed British postage stamps again. During those forty years, many changes had taken place, but the thing which defeated Perkins Bacon was the choice of inks, as well as the volume of stamps now required and the number of plates which had to be made. The year 1880 marked a major change in British policy on the production of stamps and this was to last for a further thirty years.

SURFACE PRINTED — 1850-1880 . . .

The embossed issues were unsatisfactory because they were slow to produce and unsuitable for perforation which had become general in 1854, though trials had been continuing since 1850.

In 1853, De La Rue, using the surface printing method invented by Anatole Hulot and used by the French Government, produced Receipt stamps for the Inland Revenue. These seemed to meet the requirements of the Post Office as well, so the order for the new 4d value to prepay postage to France was placed with them. The first surface printed postage stamps were issued on 31 July 1855.

The success of this innovation led to the replacement of the 6d and 1/- issues in October and November 1856. None of these first values had corner letters included in the design.

Watermarks and sheet sizes: The watermarks used during this period relate to the size of the sheet printed by De La Rue. The 4d always appeared on Garter watermark until 1880 - small in 1855, medium in 1856 and large from 1857 to 1880. It was printed in sheets of 240 arranged in four panes each of 60 stamps in ten horizontal rows of six. This continued until the Crown watermark was introduced in 1880. The only other value to use this watermark was the 8d issued in 1876 to prepay the postage rate to India via Marseilles or to Australia via Brindisi. It had exactly the same layout as the 4d value.

The Emblems watermark was used initially with the 6d and 1/- which were printed in sheets with twelve small panes of 20 (5 x 4). This arrangement was also used for the 3d (1862), 9d (1862) and 10d in error (1867). In 1867, the Emblems watermark was replaced by the Spray. This was also used on the sheets of 20. In the first year the following values changed over; 3d, 6d, 9d, 10d, 1/- and 2/-. The 10d and 2/- were new values.

The Anchor and Orb watermarks for small format stamps was only used for the 2½d value from 1875 to 1880. It was arranged in sheets of 192 in two panes of 96 each (8 x 12).

The Crown watermark was introduced progressively from 1880 and was used with 2½d (1881), 3d (1881), 4d (1880), 6d (1881) and 1/- (1881). It was also used with the two provisionals 3d/3d and 6d/6d in 1883. In all cases new plates had to be made as the new layout was in 2 panes of 120 each with ten horizontal rows of 12.

Corner Letters: The first three values, 4d, 6d and 1/- were first issued without corner letters in 1855-56. These continued to be used until new plates were introduced in 1862. The 4d and 9d were issued showing small white corner letters in January, the new 3d in May and the 6d and 1/- in December 1862. These small letters continued until they started to be replaced by larger white letters in 1865.

The 3d rose was required because the rate to France had been reduced. It was originally printed in a rose colour in October 1861, but this was considered to be too close to the 4d which was being printed in red and was not officially issued. The modified design with a deeper colour was issued on 1 May 1862 to coincide with the opening of the International Exhibition in Kensington.

It was felt that the small white letters were too fine and too difficult to read. The larger white lettered replacements began with the 1/- in February 1865 and this was followed by the 3d (March), 6d (April), 4d (July) and 9d (December). This style of lettering was also used for the 10d and 2/- which were both issued in July 1867. Large white letters were always used on the high values.

The final change in the corner letters was made from 1873 onwards. They were changed from white to coloured letters so that they were still legible, but facilitated the quicker manufacture of plates. This had become important with the growing volume of letters being handled. The first values were the 6d in March, the 3d in July and the 1/- in September 1873. On 1 July 1875, the 2½d, now required for the UPU letter rate was issued, followed finally by the 4d and 8d in July 1876. The 9d was never issued with coloured corner letters and the value was withdrawn in 1877.

These changes in lettering are not finite as to date. Unless there was a need to produce a new plate, the former style of lettering would be used. For example, the 2/- brown was issued in February 1880. It was printed from the same plate 1 as the 2/- blue and still used the large white corner letters which had been discontinued for other values.

Colours: Shades abound in this particular series of stamps, but these are usually caused by variations in the ink formulation. Certain specific changes in colour occurred and these can be tabulated as follows:

2½d rosy mauve to blue 1880
4d carmine to red 1862

. . . AND 1880-1890

4d red to vermilion 1876
4d vermilion to sage green 1877
4d sage green to brown 1880
6d lilac to chestnut 1872
6d chestnut to grey 1873
6d buff and grey were issued 1873-74
6d grey only from 1874
1/- green to brown 1880
2/- blue to brown 1880

It may seem strange that both the 1/- amd the 2/- should have changed at the same time to the same colour, but the designs were so dissimilar and the usage of the 2/- so particular that the similarity was accepted by the Post Office. At the same time, it should be remembered that the 2/- still had the large white comer letters while the 1/- had coloured ones.

Initially the plate numbers were not included in the design. It was not until December 1862 that the 1/- was issued with the figure '1' included in the design. In fact, this is chronologically recognised as plate '2' as it was the second plate to be laid down. It was not until plate 4 in February 1865 that the plate number as printed on the stamp coincided with the chronological numbers of the plate. This 1/- plate number and its immediate successor, plate '2' (chronologically plate 3) are the only plate numbers which occur on the stamps with small white comer letters.

The other values all appeared with large white corner letters as follows: 3d plate 4 in March, 6d plate 5 in April, 4d plate 7 in July, and 9d plate 4 in December 1865. New values which appeared after 1865 were all printed with their plate numbers when issued: 10d plate 1 in July 1867, 2/- plate 1 in July 1867. The other new values which appeared after 1873 appeared with coloured corner letters, the 2½d plates 1 to 23 from July 1875 and the 8d plate 1 in July 1876

It has to be admitted that the first period of the surface printed issues was probably the most complex period of British philatelic history until the Machin issue appeared in 1967. Over a period of only 25 years there are amazing variations in design, value, colour, watermark and comer letters. There are extreme rarities and common stamps, and, as with the Machin issue, some stamps on cover are at best rare and occasionally unrecorded. We have tried to simplify the description of this difficult period, but most variations, except errors and 'abnormals', have been dealt with.

In 1878, during the time that the Inland Revenue was negotiating with Perkins Bacon for the renewal of their stamps were giving problems because of the ease with which cancellations could be removed. Further, the Post Office indicated that they wished to use the same printing method 'as the stamps of higher value'. As a result, in December 1878 the Inland Revenue gave six months' notice to Perkins Bacon of the termination of their contract.

In April 1879, the Inland Revenue invited seven printing firms to tender for the supply of the 1d value only. Six of these submitted examples, but it was virtually a foregone conclusion that the new contract would be placed with De La Rue. Their tender was accepted on 27 June 1879, and the 1d Venetian red was issued on 1 January 1880.

At the same time, the contracts for the other low values, ½d, 1½d and 2d were about to expire and it was decided that these should be dealt with in the same fashion as the 1d. However, De La Rue refused to quote for these values unless they could obtain a 'Consolidated Contract' for all the values which they printed together with the postcards and postal stationery. Various amendments were agreed and the 'Consolidated Contract' was signed on 25 March 1880.

The Post Office was now faced with a new problem. In 1878, at their first Congress in Paris, the General Postal Union (which became the Universal Postal Union at the same time) circulated a series of recommendations as to the colour in which stamps should be printed. While these were not mandatory, many European countries signified their intention to comply and Great Britain felt that they should follow, especially as the new printer would give them a wider range of colours. The recommendation was that the overseas printed paper rate (½d) should be green, the overseas postcard rate (1d) should be red and the overseas letter rate (2½d) should be blue. These values were described at that time as rose, rose-red and rosy-mauve respectively.

Not only was there a recommendation for change, but it must have been difficult for the British sorters to distinguish these colours in artificial light. The 1d Venetian red had already appeared, though its introduction was academic as stamps could not be affixed to postcards until 1894, and the other two values the ½d and 2½d appeared in green and blue on 14 October and 5 February 1880. The reason that the 2½d was changed so quickly was that it was printed from an existing plate (17) in the new colour and De La Rue already held the contract for that value. Other values up to 5d were issued in 1880 and early 1881.

The situation did not remain so orderly for long. In 1881, a new Customs and Inland Revenue Act was signed. This necessitated a stamp which would be usable for fiscal as well as postal purposes. For the first time the Post Office lost control of the cancellation of stamps and, not only was the stamp to be inscribed 'Postage and Inland Revenue', but also had to be printed in doubly fugitive inks. There were only two colours available, green and lilac, hence the issue of the 1d lilac on 12 July 1881.

Because of the requirements of the 1881 Act, the whole series, less the 1/2d, were now to be printed in one or other of the two doubly fugitive inks. The first of the new stamps to appear was the 9d on 1 August 1883, the first day of the new Parcel Post service. This was followed by the remainder of the series up to 1/- on 1 April 1884. On the same day the 1/2d changed colour from green to slate blue.

It quickly became apparent that this new issue was unpopular with the public and the postal sorters. The designs were too similar and the standard of design seemed very poor when compared with all that had gone before. As the requirements called for one of two coloured inks, the first trials were to print these on coloured paper. On 13 June 1884, the first examples were submitted and further examples followed for cancellation trials. All these were unsatisfactory and, on 29 October 1884, a Stamp Committee was formed to review the situation.

This Committee had very clear terms of reference and the members sat on 11 days between 3 November 1884 and 16 March 1885. By that time they had a good idea of the solution to the problems. They decided that surface printing was essential; that two colours should be used for each stamp, one of which should be doubly fugitive; that coloured paper should be used for three values; and that corner letters should not be used.

The need to print in two colours needed to be addressed first. Until that time, all British stamps had been printed in a single colour, and, although embossing had been used on a limited scale, no other two operational printing methods had been used before 1882. At that time, the Five Pound Telegraph stamp was modified for use as a postage stamp by excising the word 'Telegraphs' from the printing plate and using a second plate with the word 'Postage'.

Although some variation in the location of each word can be found, the comparative success of this method led to the belief that De La Rue could print all the necessary values in two colours without undue difficulty in registration. In fact, this belief proved to be well founded. The registration of the two colours in the 1887 issue was good, but other problems, notably the wear at the edge of the plates, soon reared their heads.

The first values were issued on 1 January 1887 and comprised 1/2d, 1 1/2d, 2d, 2 1/2d, 3d, 4d, 5d, 6d, 9d and 1/-. Of these the 1/2d was printed in vermilion on white paper; the 2 1/2d, 3d and 6d were printed in doubly fugitive lilac on coloured paper and the 1/- was printed in doubly fugitive green on white paper. All the other values as well as the 10d and 4 1/2d which were added later were printed in two colours.

On 19 January 1887, the Post Office was asked by De La Rue whether marginal rules could be placed round the panes of the stamps. It was said that this 'would improve the appearance', but as the public seldom saw a complete sheet it seems probable that the real reason was to ensure that part of the pressure of the printing process was absorbed away from the main printing area. Initial trials were carried out with the 1d lilac, but quickly spread to all values and included the use of 'pillars' on the values printed in small sheetlets. The variations in these rules are a study in themselves.

The sheets for most values were in two panes of 120 stamps. The 4d and 9d were printed in multiples of small sheetlets of 20 stamps. When the 10d was added to the set in 1890 and the 4 1/2d in 1892, both values were printed in the small sheetlet format.

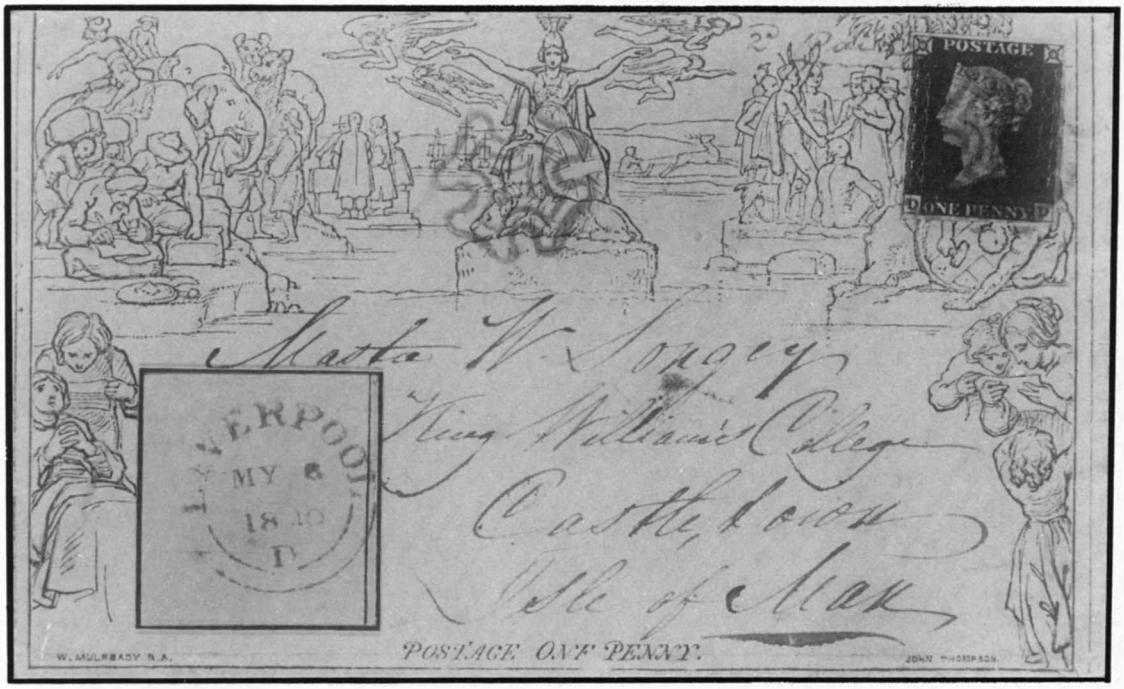
It is interesting to note that a complete set of sheets of this issue is held in the National Postal Museum. These should not be confused with the imprimaturs or registration sheets. They were drawn from the stock of London Postal Region at the time of the 1890 Guildhall Exhibition and were placed on display there. It is strange that the sheet of the 1/- value was made up from a number of blocks of stamps. No complete sheet of this value existed in London. Although this is almost certainly due to the high demand for telegraph purposes, it also indicates the rarity of multiples of this stamp.

The recommendation of the Universal Postal Union with regard to colour became a mandatory requirement at the Washington Congress in 1897 and the Post Office was obliged to change the colours of those values which had been out of line since 1881 (1d) and 1884 (1/2d). In April 1900 the 1/2d was issued in dull blue green. Unfortunately, this colour contained the poisonous pigment lead chromate. It had to be

replaced and a new colour, bright blue green, appeared shortly afterwards. The result was that the sorters were no longer able to distinguish the 1/- in artificial light and so a bicoloured version of this value was released on 11 July 1900. Although work continued to produce a 1d in red, this was to be the last stamp issued during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Another innovation which appeared during this period was the use of control numbers. Initially these appeared only on the 1d lilac in 1884 but were added to the ½d vermilion almost as soon as it was issued. Throughout this reign the controls consisted of a single letter, the use of the number to show the year did not begin until 1904. At the start, the control letter only indicated the accounting period of De La Rue.

The death of Queen Victoria and the start of a new century brought a change in attitudes. The stamps issued during the sixty years from 1840 all carried the same picture of the Queen. The Wyon design of the young woman was carried through as a symbol of the Sovereign until her death. However, the initial two stamps which appeared in 1840 had now been replaced by a series of values from ½d to Five Pounds, and the use of stamps had now become world wide.



Above: *Rowland Hill and his sketch for the proposed new postage 'labels'.* ***Below:*** *A 1d Mulready up-rated by a 1d black used on the first day of the postage stamp, 6 May 1840.*

EMBOSSED & HIGH VALUES 1847-91

The first two values issued in 1840 were well received, both as to design and their use. So much so that there was soon a demand for other values to add to the range. In particular, the rates for heavy letters and packet letters going abroad could require large numbers of the 2d stamp to be affixed unless the sender was prepared to leave the payment to the addressee.

Additionally, the British public had become accustomed to the prepayment with stamps and, when the prepayment of packet letters became obligatory a higher value of stamp was in demand. As always, the Post Office was more worried about re-use than direct forgery and, having had experience of the embossing of the stamps on postal stationery envelopes, the Inland Revenue was informed that this type of printing was preferred. At that time, no example of the reuse of postal stationery had been brought to the Post Office's attention and 'the Queen's head, being unvarnished, readily imbibes the ink (of cancellation)....'

Early in 1847, proofs of the head were taken and these were embossed on Dickinson's paper with silk thread which had been previously gummed. The 1/- was issued on 11 September 1847 and this was followed by a 10d value in November 1848. Finally the 6d was issued in March 1854. All embossed issues were produced by Somerset House.

Although the stamps were attractive and satisfied the postal requirements of various overseas rates, the method of production was too slow and expensive. The Post Office needed a new 4d value in 1855 and decided to use the surface printing method. As a result of this decision, and the success of the first value, the embossed stamps were replaced by De La Rue printings, the 6d and 1/- in October and November 1856. The 10d had ceased to be a postal rate, and was not replaced until 1867.

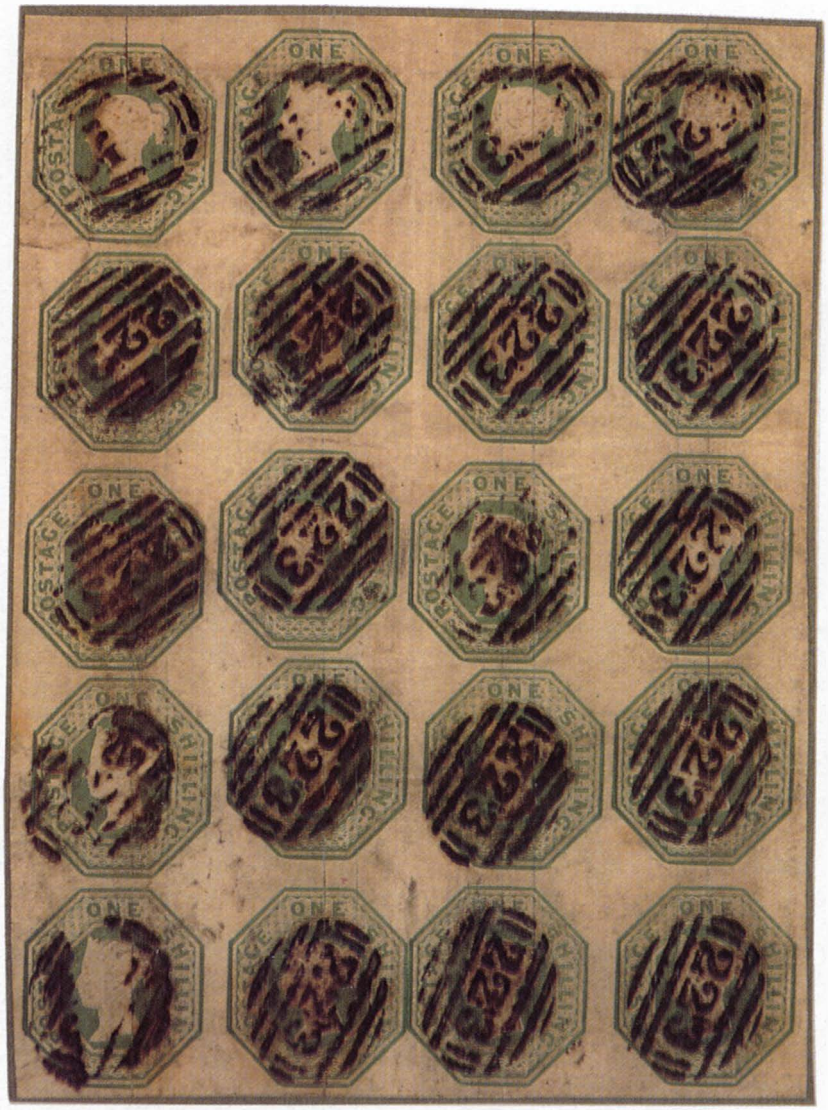
High Values: This section deals with stamps of a face value of 2/6 and above. In 1867, there was a general reassessment of postal rates and some higher values were introduced. The 5/- on 'Maltese Cross' paper was issued on 1 July 1867 in a larger format, printed in panes of 20. It was intended to prepay large packets going abroad. This design was used until 1884, but the watermark was changed to Large Anchor in 1882.

In 1878, a 10/- and One Pound stamp were added to the range for the first time. Again, initially, these values appeared on 'Maltese Cross' paper but changed to the Large Anchor later - 1882 for the One Pound and 1883 for the 10/-. To begin with these two values were also intended for postal purposes, but from 1881 the use of special Telegraph stamps was abandoned and from then until they were replaced in 1883-84, these values and the 5/- also served for the prepayment of telegraphs.

On 21 March 1882, a Five Pound value was issued. This was mainly for telegraphic purposes. No new plate was made for the stamp and a second plate to print 'Postage' where 'Telegraphs' had previously appeared was made. Although carrying the portrait of Queen Victoria, this value continued to be printed during the reign of King Edward VII.

In 1883, a new 2/6 value appeared for the first time and it was followed on 1 April 1884 (the same date as the issue of the green and lilac set) by the 5/-, 10/- and One Pound. These stamps were not treated in the same way as the lower values and their designs were not considered by the 1884 Stamp Committee. The three lower values remained in use until they were replaced by the King Edward issue in 1902. The One Pound value was printed in two panes, each of 40 stamps (10 x 4). Initially each of the stamps had a watermark of three Crowns. This was replaced by a watermark of three Orbs in 1888, but it reverted to the three Crowns in 1892 when the colour was changed from brown lilac to green. Although the corner letters for the lower values were discontinued in 1880-81 for the 1/2d and 1d and 1887 for all other values up to 1/-, they were retained for high values until 1902.

The problem with any collection of high values is that there was little postal demand for these issues. They were widely used for telegraphic purposes and these can usually be recognised by the neat circular cancellations. For the purist, the less attractive, but heavily postmarked overseas parcels examples have a greater attraction as they served a postal purpose. However, without the telegraph service, which was part of the Post Office from 1870, these high values might never have been issued.



Above left: *1847 1d Red Plate 77 B blank A,* ***Above right:*** *1864 1d Red Plate 77 used on piece,* ***Bottom:*** *Cancelled sheet of the 1847 1/- Embossed.*

KING EDWARD VII — 1901-1910

Although the Queen had ruled for over 60 years, little thought had been given to the need for a new design on her death. The opportunity for a number of changes was missed and, at the start, the new stamps were little more than the same designs with a new 'head'.

His Majesty did not approve of any of the preliminary proposals, but indicated a preference for the photographic bust prepared by the Austrian artist, Emil Fuchs. The same artist was also asked to develop a new design to incorporate the accepted head into a frame design for the single colour stamps.

Essays for the designs of the low values were submitted on 10 July 1901, and die proofs of the approved head are known dated in June. At this stage, the Post Office were well advanced in their plans to issue these values on 1 January 1902.

Following the Washington Congress of the UPU, there was a directive that the overseas printed paper rate - 1/2d - should be green; that the overseas postcard rate - 1d - should be red; and that the overseas letter rate - 2 1/2d - should be blue. It was obvious from this that the 6d value, which had been red, would have to be altered. As this was the value most used for fiscal purposes, it was essential that this should be printed in the most fugitive colour possible. It was decided that this should be in purple on white paper.

The 1/2d and 1d were printed in singly fugitive colours, but the 2 1/2d was to present a further difficulty. In the 'Jubilee' issue, the blue colour had been achieved by printing in lilac on blue paper. The Post Office thought that this would be acceptable to the UPU. The four values were printed and registered ready for issue on 1 January. On 10 December, the Post Office informed De La Rue that, despite the fact that several thousands of stamps had been printed for issue less than a month later, the colour was not acceptable and all the sheets were to be destroyed.

On 13 December, a series of colour trials were submitted of different shades of blue on white paper. Ultramarine was chosen and, on 16 December, the new colour was registered. Although some supplies of the new colour were available as planned on 1 January, there were not enough printing plates to produce sufficient sheets for the immediate demand and supplies of the former head continued to be issued by De La Rue during January 1902.

After the first issue of the four single colour stamps, the other bicolour values and the high values followed. They were issued over a period during 1902. Initially all values appeared on 'plate glazed' or ordinary paper, but this was replaced in April 1905 by chalky surfaced paper. This latter was used on all low values except the 1/2d, 1d and 2 1/2d.

While the 2 1/2d had been printed on coloured paper, there was no clash in colour between the values. However, the ultramarine could be mistaken for the 1/2d blue green, especially in artificial light. As a result, the 1/2d was issued in November 1904 in a yellow green to replace the original colour.

During the period of the 1899 contract, there was a move by the Post Office and the Inland Revenue to reduce the cost of printing stamps. It was well known that the cost of printing bicolour stamps was appreciably more than single colours. It was also apparent that the use of single fugitive inks on the lower values had been successful. A programme for the change of the most popular values was introduced and, on 1 November 1909, the first of these new values, the 4d orange, was issued.

A new value, 7d, was required in 1910 and a series of 16 colour trials were submitted for this value in February. The grey-black was chosen and this was issued to the public on 4 May 1910, only two days before the King died.

Experiments with colour trials had also been made with the 1 1/2d and 2d values. Colour trials of both were supplied in March and August 1909. It was decided to proceed first with the 2d value and the 'Tyrian Plum' colour was chosen. More than 100,000 sheets were printed for issue in early May, but with the death of the King, the issue was aborted. On 11 May 1910, instructions were given for all the plates and examples of both values to be destroyed.

The Provisional issues: When the King died, a number of changes were in the air. It was obvious that a new head would be required; it was also apparent that King George V, a recognised collector of stamps, would take far greater interest in the stamps and their design; and the De La Rue monopoly had been under consideration for some time. The first change was, in fact, the printing contract. The monopoly which had existed since 1880 was considered to be against the public interest. At the same time, the close co-operation which had existed between the Post Office and De La Rue had been eroded and when they quoted in 1910 to replace the 1899 contract, De La Rue were not successful.

KING GEORGE V — 1910-1936
THE DOWNEY HEAD

When King Edward VII died in May 1910, the design of British stamps was in the process of going through a change. Not only was there a desire to move away from the bicoloured stamps which had served well since 1887, but also the disatisfaction with De La Rue was about to result in a change of printer for the low values.

The 'Provisional' issues of 1911 gave Harrison their first experience of printing the low value stamps, and it was this limited knowledge of the typographic process which was to be entrusted with the first issues of the new reign.

King George V was a well-known collector and it was recognised that he would take more interest in the design of the stamps than either of his predecessors. The situation was further complicated by the Postmaster General, Herbert Samuel, who rashly announced that all the values would be issued on Coronation Day - 22 June 1911. Bearing in mind that this was only six months after Harrison started to print the contract, it was over-optimistic.

The King had selected a photograph taken by the Court Photographer, W. & D. Downey, for the head to be used on the stamps. This showed a three-quarter face of the King in Admiral's uniform. On 1 July 1910, three artists, G.W. Eve, A. Garth Jones and C.W. Sherborn were invited to submit designs, but none proved acceptable. At the King's suggestion Bertram Mackennal was asked to produce further designs, and, in the end, it was Mackennal and Eve who produced the designs for the King George issues. Although Eve's designs were supposed to be used for the Downey Head issue, the values in which he was involved were never issued and Mackennal was responsible for the frame and the head for both values.

When the stamps, the 1/2d and 1d, were indeed released on Coronation Day, they were greeted with a storm of criticism both on artistic and design grounds. There were problems relating to the printing, the plate making and because the public were not used to a three-quarter portrait being used. At one time, the engraver, J.A.C. Harrison (no relation to the printers), was thought to have some responsibility as he had not produced an engraving for typographic printing before. However, it was proved that his work was satisfactory by the use of his die by De La Rue to produce the plates for the Post Office Savings Bank stamps which were printed without difficulty.

3d. essay and ½d. Downey Heads

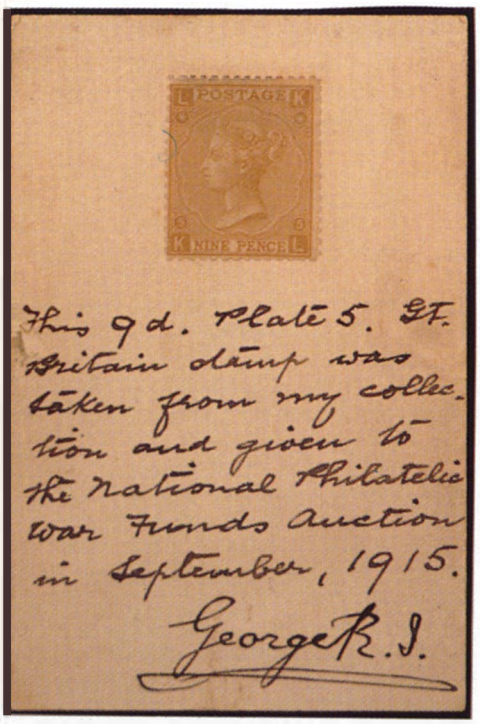
The first printings are recorded as Die 1A. In an effort to improve results, the die was deepened and Die 1B was issued in August 1911. This was still unsatisfactory and a new die (Die 2) was produced by reworking Die 1A. These were placed on sale on 1 January 1912. Even this was unsatisfactory and it was decided to replace the head with a 'Profile Head' based on Mackennal's coinage design.

Watermarks: The first issue in June 1911 continued to use the Crown watermark which had been used throughout the Edwardian period. The first change occurred with the booklets printed during August 1911. The two values appeared on a new 'Simple Cypher' (GvR) watermark with Die 1B.

Die 2 was also issued on Crown watermark paper, but this also appeared on Simple Cypher and, briefly, on Multiple Cypher. So that there are six basic stamps and watermark variations for each value.

Printers: The vast majority of stamps were printed by Harrison, but a few printings were made from the same plates at Somerset House. These can be recognised by the Controls which have a stop between the letter and the figures (B.11). These were printed on both values.

Colour Trials: During all the work which was carried out on the dies for the 1/2d and 1d, examples of all other values were produced. The only values carried through to sheet trials were the 2d and 2 1/2d but examples of all values to the 1/- exist printed either by the Printex or the Hentschel Zinc Block methods. Other trials were prepared using the se-tenant colour trials with the King Edward and King George stamps in various colours. By the end of 1911, the basic colour scheme to be used for values from 1/2d to 1/- had been decided. These did not appear to the public until the full set of Profile Heads appeared in 1912-13.



Clockwise from bottom left: *1867 9d Straw 'Abnormal' donated from the Royal Collection, 1884 5d variety 'line under d', unaccepted essays for the 6d, and 1½d by De La Rue for the 1880 issue, 1887 2½d variety imperforate, 1887 1½d with pre-perforation paper fold, 1887 5d with pre-printing paper fold.*

Clockwise from bottom left: *KEVII and KGV colour trial in proposed colour of the KGV 2½d issue, KEVII 2d 'Tyrian Plum', QV 1884 10/- forgery, QV 1891 £1, KEVII 1911 1d 'Aniline Pink', KGV unaccepted colour essay from an unknown printer.* ***Centre:*** *QV 1d Lilac with pre-printing paper crease.*

THE PROFILE HEAD — 1912-1934

The disappointment with the Downey Head and the attempts to improve the printing led to the discontinuation of the work on that design early in 1912. The development work which had been carried out on the frames and the colour schemes was retained and work began on the re-engraving of a head to insert in the existing matrices.

At the time of the decision, work was advanced on the 2d, 2½d and 3d values and it was arranged that the first value to be released would be the 2d. Bearing in mind the public reaction to the most used values - ½d and 1d - it might have seemed more logical to change these first, but, in the event, the 2d was issued in August 1912 while the others appeared in October (1d) and January (½d). Of course, the Post Office had committed itself to a single colour 2d in 1909 (the Tyrian Plum which should have been issued in 1910) and, because of cost, there was an urgency to replace this value. All other values quickly followed but the full set was not complete until 1 September 1913.

Head designs: The 'Coinage' head designed by Mackennal was used for all values up to 4d (except the 1d and 2½d), the large 'Medal' head for the 1d and 2½d and a smaller version of the 'Medal' head for the remainder up to 1/-. A bromide of Mackennal's bas-relief of the Coinage head, which had been approved by the King, was given to J.A.C. Harrison who began engraving the new head die during January 1912.

The first proofs were taken at the end of January and the work passed through seven stages of development before it was approved.

The large 'Medal' head was sculpted in clay and a photograph was sent to the King who approved it on 21 February 1912. Even so, soon afterwards it was decided to use the Mackennal design which had been used for the Coronation Medal. A composite photograph was made of this head and J.A.C. Harrison engraved the new design from a pen and ink sketch which was proofed in April 1912.

Although this head was suitable for the frame of the 1d and the 2½d, it was too large for the more ornate Eve frames for the values above 5d, so a reduced size was engraved for use on these values.

Printers and Controls: Again, the vast majority of the first issue (1912-24) was printed by Harrisons, though all values (except the 1d and 2d) were printed at Somerset House first. These printings can be recognised by the control letters where there is a dot between the letter and the number. A different font was also used for the Somerset House controls. In addition the 6d in doubly fugitive ink was printed at Somerset House until 1934.

The 1d was never printed at Somerset House, but the 2d was first printed by Harrisons without control before the Somerset House printing (C.13). The first printing was in a very pale orange which was changed when the stamps were printed at Somerset House and a new colour standard was established. It seems probable that Harrisons were not informed of the requirements for control letters to be placed on all values, and as they had previously only placed controls on the ½d and 1d, even when they were printing the 2½d, 3d and 4d, they had assumed that they were not required.

In 1924, the contract for the printing was gained by Waterlows who continued to use plates made by the Royal Mint. The layout of the sheets was changed. While Harrisons were printing, the sheets of 240 were arranged in two panes of 120 with a row of 'pillars' in between. These were discontinued by Waterlows. The other main difference was the change in watermark (see below).

In 1926, during the General Strike, a shortage of the 1½d basic letter rate stamps had to be avoided and a printing, E.26, was made by Somerset House.

Harrisons regained the contract in 1934. The low values were to be printed by photogravure, but until the new process was ready, Harrisons printed from the Waterlow plates by typography. These were gradually replaced by the new stamps but the 6d was never introduced and continued to be printed by the old method until 1938.

Watermarks: The first issues continued with the use of the Simple Cypher watermark throughout the Harrison contract. There was one experimantal printing for coils on Multiple Cypher and a few sheets were printed of the ½d and 1d.

When the Waterlow contract began, the paper was changed to Multiple Block Cypher which was used throughout the remainder of the reign.

Colours and Shades: The colour scheme for the new issue had been decided in 1911. It complied with the UPU requirements for these values and the rest all showed changes except the 6d which was still printed in doubly fugitive ink.

For the first time there was an 8d value included in the set and this was printed in black on yellow paper. It was the last British definitive to be printed on coloured paper. The 7d and 8d were included in the set to pay for parcel rates, but when these were increased in June 1918, the values were no longer required. At the same time, there were complaints about the 9d agate which was being reused as the cancellation could not be seen. In September 1922, a new colour, olive green was issued. This would have caused confusion with the 7d if that value had not been discontinued in 1918.

The 1912-23 issue is notable for the wide range of shades which were used. The main problem was the

inability of Harrisons to maintain the 1912-13 colour standards during the war period. This difficulty was created by the interruption in supplies of aniline dyes from Germany. In 1916, a consortium of British dye manufacturers, The British Dye Manufacturing Co Ltd was formed and trials were made with the ½d and 1d. These are known in several shades overprinted 'Cancelled'. Sheets and large pieces exist in the National Postal Museum, but these are very blotchy in appearance.

In 1917, the situation had become so severe that a new 2½d colour standard was produced by Somerset House under control J.17. This printing is in a very bright ultramarine and, when compared with the Harrisons 2½d under the J 17 control, it shows how far the colour standard had deviated from the original standard.

Many shades were in use for very short periods and, as a result, are very scarce. However, collectors are advised to check the provenance of any such stamp they propose to purchase and a certificate is advisable.

After the war the control of the colour standard was much improved and, especially during the Waterlow contract there were few changes.

Rates: Throughout the years from 1840, changes were made which tended to increase the weight which would be carried at the minimum basic rate of 1d. During the war, an increase in the rate of inflation led to an increase in this rate to 1½d, which was introduced on 3 June 1918. On 1 June 1920, the rate was increased further to 2d where it remained until 29 May 1922. It then reverted to 1½d at which level it remained until 1940.

These changes affected the stamps which were issued, particularly in booklets. When the rate became 2d, there were insufficient plates to print all the requiremants. A new die was prepared and this was used to make both sheets and booklets. This new die, which was used concurrently with Die I in 1921 and 1922, was issued in September 1921. When the rate reverted and the demand for the 2d value reduced, Die I was phased out and the last control was T 22.

Coils: Experiments with the use of coil vending machines had started during the reign of Edward VII. These were made by joining the coil at every 10th stamp. Initially these were made up by the promoters, but, from 1913, the Post Office sold rolls manufactured by the printers. This continued until Harrison lost the contract in 1924, except that there was an experimental printing of continuous reel by Somerset House in 1923. Sideways delivery coils were also available made up from rolls joined every 12th stamp. These were first issued in 1913.

Waterlow began with continuous rolls for both vertical and sideways delivery in 1924. This led to the sideways watermark stamps as well as upright and inverted (booklets).

The George V low values, after a shaky start with the Downey Head and all the colour problems of the war years, still managed to become a classic design and one which has been studied in depth in all its many facets. It is a testimony to the work of the designers and the engraver that the set lasted for more than twenty years without a major change, other than the methods of printing.

PHOTOGRAVURE ISSUE 1934-1936

In 1934, Harrisons regained the contract for printing the low value definitives. The basis under which this contract was placed was that the stamps would be printed by the photogravure process.

The photogravure printing method had first been used for stamps in Bavaria in 1914 and Harrisons had limited experience having only printed stamps for Egypt by this method at the time the contract was placed. The choice of this method of production was dictated not only by the price. In fact, the quoted figure was not the lowest that the Post Office received, but the main advantage was the greatly increased rate of production which was required to meet the rapid growth in the volume of mail carried.

Although Harrisons quoted for the supply of photogravure stamps, they were not capable of printing the numbers required when the contract was placed. The Waterlow plates were transferred to Harrisons and printing continued by typography until the new stamps were ready for release. Generally speaking, these can best be recognised by the control numbers. By 1936, all values had changed to the new production method except the 6d, which Harrison printed by typography until the end of 1938.

The Mackennal head, developed for the lower values of the definitive series, continued to be used and the same frames were used for each value as had been previously issued. Trials were prepared using these frames with the same dimensions and the photogravure head. These were printed in a number of colours using a solid background to the head in order to simulate the effect of photogravure. It was at this stage that the first problems with the doubly fugitive ink for the 6d was experienced.

The first photogravure stamps were issued in September 1934. These were the 1d and the 1½d values which were released in the large format (18.7 x 22.5mm). It was soon found that this size did not leave sufficient room for the perforations and, in 1935, an intermediate format (18.4 x 22.2mm) was issued for the ½d, 1d, 1½d and 2d. Finally, in late 1935, the size was reduced again to the small format

***Top (left to right)**: Treasury Competition essays by Pewtress, Low and Pewtress and Myers and Compa spectacular "Buccleuch Find" discovered in 1945, showing the bottom four rows of a sheet of 1840 2d blue*

mpany then a block 18 used 1d blacks from plate 3, believed to be the largest known. ***Bottom:*** *The lues from plate 2. This is the largest unused block of the first pair of postage stamps thought to exist.*

(17.9 x 22.7mm) and this was used for all values. Slight variations also exist in the size of the booklet and coil stamps. As the King had died on 20 January 1936, the 5d, 10d and 1/- were all issued posthumously.

The 6d was never produced by photogravure until the 6d value of King George VI was issued in 1939. The problem revolved around the use of the doubly fugitive ink for this value which had a wide fiscal usage. As ever, the Post Office was worried about re-use. This type of ink was very thin and it was found that it would not hold in the 'cells' of the printing cylinder. The problem was made more difficult by the unnecessary 'fussiness' of the frame design. Initial trials were made on a small 30-set plate of the 1½d value in August and September 1933. These were followed by further trials on a six-set plate of the 3d. None of these, or the later trials on the 5d value, which had the same frame design as the 6d, were considered to be satisfactory by the Post Office.

At this stage, there was a pause in the development. Harrisons had now produced the 6d value successfully by typography and another urgent development had been necessary to decide the size of the image of the other popular values. It was not until December 1934 that the Post Office was sent two further 5d blocks in the accepted colour.

On 11 February 1935, for the first time, trials were sent from a small 6d plate. These were all printed on different papers and a quantity of the typographed stamps were also sent for comparison. Although there is no official correspondence to confirm this, it seems that these were considered to be satisfactory. Two weeks later, further samples were sent printed on watermarked paper. These were approved.

Paper was ordered and a warrant was issued to print 300,000 sheets. However, printing on a plate of six and running a cylinder are two different things and it was impossible for Harrisons to maintain the standard required. After the King's death, trials continued, but by April 1936 it was obvious that without a change of the basic design of the frame it would not be possible to produce sheets to the standard that the Post Office required. The matter was then abandoned.

The photogravure issue was the first produced by this method for Great Britain. With the exception of the 6d, the set was a great success and this method of printing has remained with us ever since.

HIGH VALUES "THE SEAHORSES"

Although there had been some similarity in the series of designs for values from 2/6 to five pounds previously, the Seahorses design which served with minor amendments from 1913 to 1939, was the first conscious attempt to produce a series of high values with a common design.

The design was developed by Bertram Mackennal and was used initially for four values 2/6, 5/-, 10/- and one pound. They were to have been produced from a single die, engraved by J.A.C. Harrison, with the value tablets completed individually. In the event, there was a problem with the engraving of the Union Jack design on Britannia's shield which was heraldically incorrect and each value had the value and the flag engraved separately, which resulted in recognisable varieties.

The first stage of the die was proofed in August 1912, following on from the profile head developed for the low values. It was adapted for use with recess printing rather than the typographical method of the low values. Specialists record nine different stages of development of the overall background design. These range in date through August and September 1912.

The printing of the high values of King Edward VII had been undertaken by Somerset House during the interim period (1911-13). The decision to use recess printing led to the search for a new printer and, among those which quoted, the contract was awarded to Waterlow Bros and Layton.

In January 1913, colour trials were prepared using Waterlow's inks. Die proofs in all issued colours exist on an imperforate proof of the 2/6 issue. The four values to one pound were issued between 30 June (2/6) and 1 August 1913 (10/- and one pound). The registration sheet for the one pound value was dated after the recorded date of issue (7.8.13). This may simply mean that the registration sheet was held for the next visit of the Inspector, but it is probable that the date of issue is taken from the Post Office Notice which stated that 1 August would be the date of issue, but, in the event, it was a few days late.

KING EDWARD VIII — 1936

King George V died in January 1936 and was succeeded by his eldest son, the Prince of Wales, who became King Edward VIII. Unlike his father, the new king took little or no interest in the stamps to be issued during his reign, though, of course, he was determined that the head used should be satisfactory.

There was an immediate need to redesign the issues not only to change the head of the Sovereign, but also to simplify the frames of the existing issue which were redolent of an older and more ordered age. Not only that; although the frames had been modified to some extent in 1934, they were still suitable for the printing method now being used. It had proved impossible to print the 6d in doubly fugitive ink and although there was no reason to expect that similar difficulties would develop with other values, it was felt that a simpler design would be more suitable for the new process.

(Seahorses - continued from page 42)

For financial reasons, Waterlow Bros and Layton relinquished the contract for printing high values to De La Rue in 1915. Initially, De La Rue were asked to quote for all four values, but when the order was placed, the one pound value was removed and the volume of production of the the 10/- was increased to compensate.

De La Rue held the contract until 1918 when it was placed with Bradbury Wilkinson. Throughout the period of the De La Rue contract, the printers were in constant trouble with the Post Office either for the quality or the availability. De La Rue was required to print from the Waterlow plates which were already worn. On top of this, they had quoted based on using a new high speed press which was unsuitable for the plates delivered from the previous printer. The position improved when De La Rue used new plates for the 2/6 value, but when they were asked to requote for the new contract, the price was raised to an unacceptable level.

Bradbury Wilkinson held the contract until 1934. There were several minor changes during this period, including Bradbury Wilkinson retaining the contract in 1929.

In 1933, Bradbury Wilkinson lost the contract to Waterlows, a reconstituted descendant of Waterlow Bros and Layton. Because of the wear which had occurred during the preceding twenty years, it was decided to produce a re-engraved die which was used to make the plates for the new printing. The revised design was issued in October 1934 and continued until replaced by the issue for King George VI in 1939.

The Seahorses, as a set, were the first unified high value issue and, with the King George VI issues, the previous system of various designers was used in 1939 and 1951. The next time a uniform design appeared was the 'Castles' issue of 1955.

1936 King Edward VIII Coronation essay

In the event, little more than rare essays of the proposals for the issues of King Edward VIII have survived in private hands. There were intentions for a full Coronation issue and for some early attempts at pictorial issues. A colour scheme for the whole set of definitives exists in the National Postal Museum, but only the four most popular values were issued to the public. These stamps, which were designed from a suggestion by H.J. Brown and used a portrait taken by Hugh Cecil, are the sole philatelic record of the eldest son of the previous Monarch. The four stamps were issued in September 1936 and were also overprinted for use in the Morocco Agencies.

The only other stamps which can be attributed to this reign, are the Postage Dues, which were issued on paper watermarked 'K8E', though they remained in the basic 'Eve' design which was used from 1914 to 1971.

Studies of the stamps of this reign also include Stamp Booklets and coils. Of these, the coils are the most difficult to find of any stamps of this reign. The 1/2d and 1d exist from continuous coil, but the 2 1/2d only exist in made up coils with a join every 20 stamps. These are the scarcest of all the King Edward stamps.

Following the abdication of King Edward VIII in December 1936, the throne was passed to King George's second son, the Duke of York, who was to reign until 1952 as King George VI.

Clockwise from bottom left: *KGV 1935 unaccepted 6d issue overprinted 'cancelled', KGV 1913 3d unaccepted colour essay, KGV 1913 'Seahorse' colour trial, KGV 1935 1½d with 'Beard flaw', KGV 1924 ½d doubly printed*

Clockwise from bottom left: *KGVI 1941 2d 'Tete-Beche', KGV 1935 Silver Jubilee 2½d 'Prussian Blue', KGV 1929 PUC £1 colour trials, KGV 1935 Silver Jubilee unaccepted essay, KEVIII 1936 1½d unaccepted essay, KGVI 1940 Penny Postage Centenary unaccepted essay.*

KING GEORGE VI — 1936-1952 DEFINITIVE ISSUES

When King Edward VIII abdicated in December 1936, he was succeeded by his younger brother, the Duke of York who became King George VI. It was also decided that the Coronation date, already set, should remain as 12 May 1937. This meant that the Post Office had to produce a new issue and a commemorative in only five months.

All progress made for the King Edward issue had to be scrapped and a new definitive issue had to be prepared. It was quickly decided that a revision of the King Edward issue with a new head would not be acceptable and it was felt that a frame incorporating some representation of the four parts of the United Kingdom should be included. The design for the head was entrusted to Edmund Dulac and the frame to Eric Gill.

Dulac was a Frenchman who became a naturalised British subject in 1912. He had made his name as a book illustrator and had come to prominence as the designer of the King's Poetry Medal in 1934. He had submitted designs for the King Edward issue, notably the hexagonal design of frame which was to be used during this reign for all values from 7d to 1/-.

Dulac prepared a large medallion based on a photograph of the King and submitted the result to Buckingham Palace for approval. The King was so pleased with the result that it was used on all stamps of the reign except for two commemoratives.

Eric Gill was a typographic designer and his name is still used for the typefaces that he developed. His designs for the frame of the low values included flowers or leaves in the four corners. The selected pattern used the symbols of the four countries - rose, thistle, shamrock and daffodil.

The first three stamps were issued on 10 May 1937. These were the ½d, 1d, and 2½d values. It may seem surprising that the 1½d value for the internal letter rate was not included, but this was the value of the Coronation commemorative which was not replaced until 30 July 1937. The remaining values to 1/- appeared over the following months and the set was completed on 1 May 1938. An 11d value was added to the range in December 1947.

The designs were varied through the range of values. ½d to 3d were in dark colours with a light head. The 4d to 6d showed the same Dulac/Gill design but with a dark head on a light background. The 7d to 1/-, including the 11d, showed the Dulac hexagonal design.

During the Second World War, it was found necessary to reduce the intensity of the colours in order to save on the pigments. These changes were implemented between July 1941 and September 1942. The six lowest values to 3d were affected.

From the introduction of control numbers in Victorian times, these had been developed for use on all values up to 1/- by 1913. By 1947, these controls were no longer necessary, as it was felt that their function was covered by the cylinder number which also appeared. The last control number used was V47. The final changes in the low values occurred in 1950/51, when there was a complete reshuffle of the colours for the five lower values brought about by the requirements of the UPU. At the same time, the 4d for overseas letters had also been amended. This change, implemented as a result of criticism at the Paris Congress in 1947 was superseded by the adandonment of the colour system at the Brussels Congress in 1952!

The high values, 2/6 to 10/- initially, were entrusted to Waterlow for printing as they had regained the contract for recess printing in 1936. The designs for the 2/6 and the 5/- were offered to Dulac. His designs were accepted and were issued in August and September 1939. The 10/- value was entrusted to the Royal College of Arms and the design by the Hon. George R. Bellew was approved. This design was later (1948) used for the Pound value as well.

As with the low values, some change in the colours was necessary during the Second World War. The 2/6 changed from brown to green and the 10/- from dark to a lighter blue.

In 1951, the year of the Festival of Britain, a new series of designs for the high values was introduced and was issued in May to coincide with the Festival.

Throughout the reign both stamp booklets and coils continued to be issued. Both produced variations in watermarks: inverted in the case of booklets and sideways for the coils. However, the watermark 'GvIR' was used on all values throughout, though that used for the high values was, of necessity, of a different size.

COMMEMORATIVES — 1924-1951

At the UPU Congress in Rome in 1906, a proposal was made by the German delegation that stamps issued with a limited period of validity, i.e. commemoratives or special issues, should not be accepted outside the country of origin. This proposal was accepted by Congress, but the British delegates abstained on the grounds that such issues should not be made at all! With the expression of this point of view, it is hardly surprising that the British Post Office did not contemplate any special issues until 1924, almost 84 years after the first stamps were issued.

The event which caused this change of heart was the British Empire Exhibition which was held at Wembley from 23 April to 1 November 1924. This event was intended to show the work, exports and 'glory' of the Empire which had survived the 'War to end all wars'. It was decided that there should be two values and several items of postal stationery to promote the Exhibition. However, this arrangement was reduced in importance when the Exhibition Board announced that these items would only be available to visitors to the site. Such was the interest created by this first issue, that public demand forced a change of mind and it was agreed that all items would be available by post from 1 July 1924.

As this was to be the first commemorative set for Great Britain and was to represent the Empire, a number of designs were solicited and a committee decided on a design by Harold Nelson, showing a lion with the rising sun behind.

There were two values, 1d and 1 1/2d, which between them covered most of the internal and overseas rates. The initial supplies were line perforated, but later deliveries were perforated on a comb machine. Both measured perf. 14 but the comb series had larger holes.

Coil stamps were required for vending machines and these were made up with a vertical join every 10th stamp. The 1d value for both the 1924 and 1925 issues are recorded with coil joins.

The weather during the summer of 1924 was so poor that attendance levels did not come up to expectations. As a result, it was decided to reopen the Exhibition in 1925. The dates were 9 May to 31 October. Again, stamps and stationery were made available but were not as popular as in 1924. Comparable sales figures are 13.2 million in 1924 and 3.5 million in 1925.

The original engraving of Harold Nelson's design had been undertaken by J.A.C. Harrison. When it was decided to alter the design by simply amending the date, the original die was re-engraved. Some disturbance of the leaves at the right of the 'N' of EXHIBITION can be observed.

The Exhibition Post Office remained open after the Exhibition and it finally closed on 19 December 1925 when all the remaining stocks were withdrawn.

The second commemorative issue produced by Great Britain was for the 9th Postal Union Congress in 1929. Before the First World War, there had been special postmarks and stationery issued at Congresses, but in 1920 and 1926 at Madrid and Stockholm special stamp issues had appeared and these had also been used as presentation items for the delegates.

It was initially decided that there should be four low values only, but in the development of the plans for the Congress, it was pointed out that the value of the resulting set was only 5½d, hardly worthy of presentation to the delegates. It was then decided to include a One Pound value to the set. For this, a design by Harold Nelson was adapted from an earlier design for the 1924 issue.

It had also been decided to include stamp booklets and coils so that the widest distribution of the stamps would be possible. So successful was this programme that some of the values were even used fiscally.

The stamps were issued on 10 May 1929, the opening day of the Congress. Coils and booklets from which most of the watermark varieties derive appeared at the same time. Special postmarks and stationery were available and many items were cancelled to order for the delegates.

As was to be expected with such a wide distribution, the quantities sold were much greater than in the 1924 issue, ranging from 751 million for the 1½d to 27 million for the 2½d and only 61,000 for the high value.

The first Royal event to be commemorated was the Silver Jubilee of King George and Queen Mary who had acceded to the throne in May 1910. The whole year was set aside for celebrations, and the stamps were issued on 7 May 1935. The values selected were those of the previous low values.

The preparation of the designs was a long drawn out process. Various designs were considered, and several different pictures of the King's head were

tried. Finally, three proposals by Barnett Freedman were selected for further trials. Harrisons were asked to produce essays in photogravure which were submitted in a range of colours including Prussian blue.

The final accepted design was approved early in 1935 and the decisions on the colours were left to the last moment. Even up to the final essays, the 2½d value was essayed in both ultramarine and Prussian blue and even though the King preferred the traditional colour essays, the more turquoise version was also printed from the production cylinder. In error, three sheets were issued at Edmonton in North London.

Again booklets were issued, but because of the size of the stamps it was not possible to use coils. The quantities sold were approximately half of those sold of the preceding set with 480 million copies of the penny halfpenny.

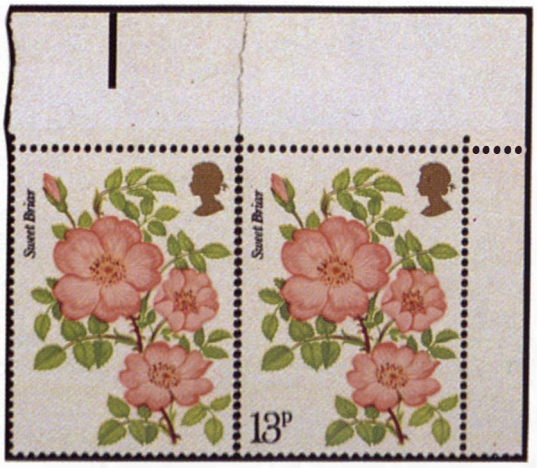
After the death of King George V, it was proposed that there should be a Memorial issue. This came to nothing, but a few examples of the essays showing the King's head by Van Dyke exist in private hands.

During the reign of King George VI (1937-1952), there were eight commemorative issues covering a wider range of subjects. These still covered Royal, National and International events. The Royal subjects were the Coronation issue and the Silver Wedding issue; National items included the Centenary of the Penny Black, the Victory issue and the Festival of Britain; and international recognition was given to the Olympic Games and the 75th Anniversary of the UPU.

With the exception of the Coronation issue and the Silver Wedding, all issues showed the Dulac head and the values used were conservative. The use of airmail led to the inclusion of higher values in the Olympic Games and UPU issues, but the 1940 issue for the Penny Black had no less than six values, the largest commemorative set, in terms of different values, until the Christmas issue of 1986.

The reason for the larger number of values in this issue was partly the fact that the postage rates were increased only just before the issue went on sale and, consequently, additional values were required.

The experimental use of both coils and booklets was not continued for commemoratives during this reign.



***Top:** 1963 Red Cross Centenary Congress - red omitted.* ***Middle:** 1965 Post Office Tower - olive-yellow omitted.* ***Bottom:** 1976 Royal National Rose Society - value tablet omitted.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH II
THE WILDING HEAD — 1952-1967

The first adhesives of the new reign were issued on 5 December 1952, only 10 months after the death of King George VI. The first values were the 1½d and 2½d - the printed paper rate and the inland letter rate. As with all the first series, the paper was Tudor Crown watermark.

All definitive issues of low values were issued piecemeal, except for the decimal issue of 1971 and this series was no exception. The complete range of values from ½d to 1/6 was not completed until February 1954. There were five different designs - ½d to 2d; 2½d to 4d; 5d to 7d; 8d to 11d; and 1/- to 1/6. Each group had a different designer and the photograph used for the Queen's head by Dorothy Wilding was the sole unifying factor. Throughout the life of this series, all printings up to 1/6 were carried out by Harrisons using the photogravure process. All panes were of 240 stamps (20 x 12).

Watermarks: Variations in watermarks occurred throughout the life of this series of designs. The Tudor Crown watermark was used from 1952 to 1954. Printings on the St Edward's Crown paper began to be introduced in 1955 and were completed in July 1956 when the 3d was issued. This paper was replaced by the Crowns only watermark in 1958. From a general point of view, the No Watermark paper began to be introduced with the Machin low values in 1967, but none of the Wilding Head definitives were printed on this paper except the Regionals (see over).

Changes of colour or shade: For operational reasons, a number of changes in shade took place. In October 1956, the 2d was altered from red-brown to light red-brown because it was difficult to see the cancellations. This change occurred during the life of the St Edward's Crown watermark and just after the 2d in the original colour that had been released with sideways watermark (21 July 1956).

In May 1958, the 6d value was changed from reddish-purple to deep claret because the ink was more fugitive for fiscal purposes and the 4d was altered from ultramarine to deep ultramarine in April 1965.

Changes of value: In February 1959 a new value, 4½d, was added to the range to pay for the new double weight letters. The rate for a single letter had been increased to 3d on 1 October 1957, the first change to the basic rate since 1940. This value only exists with Crowns watermark, though it was involved with the frequent changes of phosphor and graphite lines.

An alteration in the parcel rates in April 1953 had rendered the 11d obsolete and it is surprising that it was not withdrawn sooner. However, it remained on sale until 1955, but this stamp does not exist on Crowns watermark.

Sorting Trials: The continuing growth of the volume of mail and the need to speed up the methods of sorting had exercised the Post Office for many years. As early as 1936 a Dutch Transorma mechanical sorting machine had been installed in Brighton, but it was becoming possible to think further ahead as the use of electronics became more viable.

The first Automatic Letter Facing machine (ALF) was introduced at Southampton in 1957. The system for 'facing' letters relied on the machine's head 'reading' the area of high ink intensity in the top right hand corner of an envelope. This proved to be inefficient as the system was affected by the design of the stamp.

To improve the results it was necessary to give the stamp some characteristic which would transcend the more mundane which it already had. The first attempt used stamps which had electrically conducting black graphite lines applied vertically to the back of the stamp, under the gum. These first experiments were also known as 'Naphthadag'.

There were two lines on the back of each value except the 2d, the printed paper rate. The first set was issued in November 1957 when all the values to 3d in sheets were issued on St Edward's Crown paper. Coils were also introduced. A second set on Crowns paper with the same values, plus the 4d and 4½d was issued during 1958-59. This issue also included coils and, for the first time, booklets with graphite lines were issued.

Phosphor Issues: In November 1959, some existing graphite stamps were overprinted with phosphor lines on the face of the stamps. The first issue included the ½d, 1d and 1½d with St Edward's Crown and the remaining values to 4½d on Crowns watermark. The 2d was also printed in error on a small number of sheets of the St Edward's Crown.

The phosphor treatment proved to be successful and the graphite lined stamps were circulated to all other areas and were sold as normal. In June 1960, stamps were issued for use with the Southampton ALF which had been converted to read phosphor only. The 1/2d to 4d plus the 6d and 1/3 were issued. Again the 2d was differentiated by having a single band. The usage of phosphor over the next few years together with changes in postal rates meant that the 2d, 2 1/2d and 3d all appeared with only one band.

As the use of the ALF machines, address coding and automatic letter sorting had spread to other areas by 1967, all values had been issued with phosphor bands. Booklets and coils followed in due course. From this time, all British stamps have been issued with phosphor bands until the introduction of phosphorised paper in the 1970s (see under the Machin Head).

Regional Issues: Even before the Second World War some agitation had been started to allow the constituent parts of the United Kingdom to have their own issues. With the capture of the Channel Islands in 1940, a degree of postal independence was recognised and this was confirmed by the issue of the Channel Islands Liberation issue in 1948.

Even so it was another ten years before the Regional issues appeared. On 18 August 1958, stamps were issued for the 'mainland' regions of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (3d, 6d and 1/3) and for the 'island' regions of Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man (3d only). As the rates changed, watermarks were withdrawn and phosphor was introduced, the number of values was increased, or values were changed. When introduced, all stamps were printed on Crowns watermark paper, but from 1968 the unwatermarked paper was used.

The 'islands' regions issued a 2 1/2d adhesive for postcards in 1964. These were followed by other changes: a 4d value for all regions in 1966; a change of colour for the 4d in 1968 and a new 5d value; a further change of colour to red for the 4d in 1969; the 6d of the 'mainland' group was replaced by a 9d in March 1967 and at the same time a 1/6 value was added.

On 30 September 1969, Guernsey and Jersey became independent postally and their regional stamps were invalidated within the Channel Islands at that time, though they remained valid throughout the remainder of the United Kingdom.

The remaining four regions continued to use the Wilding Head Regionals until they were replaced with the Machin Head designs in 1971.

Se-tenant booklets: Before the commencement of two colour photogravure printing in 1960, it had not been practical to produce panes of stamps where different values in different colours would appear on the same pane. This changed in the 1960's and for the first time se-tenant pairs appeared on British stamps.

On 15 July 1963, Holiday Resort booklets were issued at 2/- which included one pane with three 1/2d stamps and one 2 1/2d. These were well received by the holiday-makers and philatelists and were followed by further such booklets, but with different arrangements, in 1964 and 1965. The latter was after the rate change and showed the 3d se-tenant with the 1d.

The Wilding Head design was the first British Sovereign's head which was taken directly from a photograph successfully. Earlier examples had all either been a failure (the Downey Head) or used an interim design stage before producing a sculpted bust. The range of varieties of watermark and the introduction of graphite lines and phosphor make this an extremely interesting study which has been overlooked by many collectors. Coupled with the multiplicity of overprints for use in Morocco, Tangier and the Persian Gulf, this issue gives a great width of interest.

MACHINS — 1967-89

The Machin Head design, which first appeared to public acclaim in 1967, has been with us for 22 years; the same length of time as the Profile Head design of King George V (1912-34). However, the ever-increasing level of postage rates and the continued introduction of different papers to increase the speed of sorting has resulted in more basic stamps than anyone could possibly have visualised.

Design: The search for a replacement of the photographic Wilding Head by a more symbolic representation of the Sovereign's head had begun in the early 1960s. Designs prepared by many artists were found to be unacceptable for aesthetic or operational reasons, and Arnold Machin OBE, who had designed the coinage head, was asked to make a plaster cast of a suitable sculpted head to be used on stamps.

The first values, still in the pre-decimal currency, were issued in June 1967, though it was 13 months before the set was completed to the 1/9 value. For the first time in British philatelic history, all the values had an identical design and, when the decimal issue was

released in 1971, another 'first' was achieved as all values appeared on the same date.

Colour: Initially, the design was intended to be printed in deep rich colours and the pre-decimal set shows this quite clearly. However, at that time, the phosphor signal for sorting purposes was obtained by using phosphor bands - from June 1968 two bars for all values except the second class rate which had one.

A colour change to the 4d was necessary for operational reasons in 1969, but after decimalisation, the changes in rate became so frequent that virtually annual changes were made.

Trials with printing phosphor over the whole face area began in 1969 with the 1/6 value, but it was only when phosphor or fluorescent agents began to be incorporated in the paper that the bands started to disappear. This had a secondary effect as now the signal from the phosphor had to pass through the ink and the original solid colours had to be weakened and the 'graduated' backgrounds were introduced. By 1985, the technology had improved and it was possible to revert to the deeper colours again.

During the period of the graduated backgrounds, there were only a limited number of colours available so that many of these had to be reused and the changes which came with each alteration in the rate have led to many values appearing in up to three different colours.

Printers: At first, all the printing of the low values was carried out by Harrisons who had held the low value contract since 1934. However, in 1979, distribution problems at the Post Office Supplies Department led to a shortage of the 8p second class value and a contract was placed with Enschede in Holland, the only time that the printing of British stamps has been placed abroad. The Enschede 8p can be differentiated from the Harrison printing, mainly by the marginal marks, though the colour was slightly different.

The Post Office decided that it could not continue with Harrisons having the complete monopoly of the vital low values and, in 1980, stamps printed in lithography by the House of Questa (2p, 5p and 75p) and Waddingtons (4p and 20p) were issued. In 1984, Waddington acquired the House of Questa and the Security Printing Department was consolidated at Questa. Gradually, Questa took over the printing of the Waddington values which also included some of the Country definitives. These can be recognised by a perforation change.

In 1988, Harrisons took back all the sheet printed values from Questa, who were left to print all the Country adhesives, but in the same year Questa began to print 'window' booklets in the first and second class rates. In 1989, some booklets also began to be printed in lithography by Walsall Security Printers.

Rates: An understanding of the bewildering changes in the colours of the Machin issue can only be gained by a study of the postage rates. When the decimal issue was introduced in 1971, the first and second class rates were set at 3p and 2½p. In a series of steps these have now increased to 20p and 15p over 19 years.

Values issued for each change not only represent these two values, but the second weight step for both classes, the European letter rate, the airmail postcard rate and the B and C zone airmail rates. As this range of 7 to 8 values will already have been issued previously in some cases, new colours are used.

Technical changes: Changes in phosphor papers, perforations and gum all add to the complexities of the issue. Even more changes to suit booklets rather than sheets of stamps add to the varieties. This has been made even more intricate by the 'window' booklets which originally had a perforated selvedge which was replaced by imperforate edges which can be top edge, bottom edge or two adjacent edges! As an example, the Non-Value Indicators issued in August-September 1989 have been produced by three printers and exist with no less than five different perforation varieties.

Redrawn values: A further variation has appeared gradually since 1976. When the decimal Machin series was introduced in 1971, all values of the low value set were below 10p and the design for the numerals used for the value were placed in the lower left corner which could accomodate one figure plus a fraction and the letter 'p'. Even while the higher values lay between 10p and 19p it was possible, but when the fraction was also included, a change was necessary. The first to appear in the narrower numbers was the 10½p in 1976, the latest is the 3p which only appeared with a redrawn value in October 1989 as part of the multi-value coil.

Se-tenant pairs: Throughout the period of this design booklets have provided many examples of se-tenant values. This became even more usual with the appearance of the annual 'Prestige' booklets which always have a multi-value pane. In 1989, for the first time, se-tenant Country adhesives appeared for Scotland in the 'Prestige' booklet.

The se-tenant values have also appeared in multi-value coils. These were originally dispensed from vending machines, but once the rates got above 7p this was no longer practical and the only strips since 1980 have been the 'Reader's Digest" strips of four stamps which have been issued at the second class rate since 1981.

Regionals: After 1971, there were still four regional issuing authorities; the three mainland countries and the Isle of Man. The first decimal currency adhesives were issued in July 1971. On 5 July 1973, the Isle of Man Post Office became independent and no further regionals were issued for that territory.

The three remaining 'Countries' have continued to issue new values as the postage rates changed. In 1981, the printing changed from Harrisons photogravure to lithography by Waddington for Scotland and Questa for Wales and Northern Ireland. After 1985, all were printed by the House of Questa. The emblems representing the three countries were redrawn to make the printing by lithography easier, and the redrawn values were included, some values occurring with both styles of numbering.

In principle, the Country adhesives are issued about six weeks after the change of rate and, on each occasion, there are four adhesives - first and second class, the European letter rate and the zone B airmail rate.

The complexity for the specialist of this issue is a joy, but for the tyro there seems to be a never ending range of stamps and changes. The use of booklets, sheets, printers and printing methods, paper, gum, Phosphor bands and Country adhesives either bring pleasure or despair and there have been many suggestions that the time is ripe for a change.

However, such a change is unlikely in the short term. Trials have been made by the Post Office with the usual approaches to Buckingham Palace, but it is difficult to see what can be done to improve the present representation of Her Majesty. One attempt went to the stage of essays for submission, but these were not acceptable. In fact this trial was used for one of the Queen's portraits on her 60th birthday issue. Perhaps it is as well to stay with the Machin Head!

HIGH VALUES — 1955-1988

Throughout the reign a unified design was used for the high values. When the 'Castles' issue first appeared in September 1955, it was the first time that a basic common theme had been used since the Seahorses were withdrawn in 1939. From 1955 until 1977, the high values continued to be printed by recess and then by photogravure until October 1988 when the new series reverted to recess.

Castles (1955-1969): The first castles issue had a common frame design with a vignette for each value representing each of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom - 2/6 Carrickfergus Castle for Northern Ireland; 5/- Caernarvon Castle for Wales; 10/- Edinburgh Castle for Scotland; and One Pound Windsor Castle for England. The initial printing was by Waterlows on St Edward's Crown watermark paper.

In 1958, De La Rue gained the contract and the stamps were printed from plates produced from the original Waterlow die. The paper continued to be the St Edward's Crown paper until there was a general change to Crowns only watermark in June and July 1958.

In 1963, the printer changed again, this time to Bradbury Wilkinson who continued to use the Waterlow master die and the Crowns only paper. In 1967-68, the final change took place when, in line with other values, the use of watermarks was discontinued. So over a period of only 13 years, three printers were used and three different varieties of paper, creating five different recognisable groups of four stamps. In addition, there were variations in the colour of the paper used, varying from white to light cream and with chalky paper being used on some values.

Machin Head - Recess Printed: On 5 March 1969, the pre-decimal Machin high values were issued. These were printed in sheets of 160 with four panes of 40. There was no watermark and the colours followed those which had been established with the Castles issue: i.e. 2/6 brown, 5/- red, 10/- blue and One Pound black. This set was bound to have a short life as it had already been announced that the currency would change to decimal on 15 February 1971.

In anticipation of that date, a new series of high values with 10p cerise, 20p olive green and 50p blue were issued on 17 June 1970. The One Pound was also reissued in black, but printed in sheets of 100.

Variations in paper can be found for all values. On 11 August 1971, the 10p was replaced by a small format photogravure stamp; on 6 December 1972, the One Pound was issued with a redrawn value tablet to align with the style used on all other values; on 25 February 1976 the 20p was replaced with a photogravure printing and finally, on 2 February 1977, the 50p was introduced in the smaller size. As this would have left the One Pound as the sole recess printed stamp, the method of printing was changed.

Machin Head - Photogravure printed: On 2 February 1977, three high values were printed by Harrisons in a larger format. These were the One Pound, Two Pounds and Five Pounds. These stamps remained in use until replaced in 1988.

In 1983, a new series to coincide with the lowest parcel post rate was introduced. The initial value, 1.30p was issued on 3 August, ostensibly to commemorate the centenary of the parcels service, though the stamp was not inscribed as such. Further values were issued for each parcel rate change: 1.33p (28.8.84), 1.41p (17.9.85), 1.50p (2.9.86) and 1.60p (15.9.87). The colours of these stamps alternated: the first, third and fifth were pale drab and deep greenish blue while the second and fourth were pale mauve and grey black. This series was discontinued together with all the photogravure high values in 1988 when a new 'Castles' design was introduced.

Although the placing of colour dots in the gutter margins of commemorative stamps was discontinued in 1978, these high values continued with these dots until they were withdrawn.

'Castles' from 1988: On 18 October 1988, a new series of four castle designs was issued. These were based on photographs by the Duke of York and showed the same four castles as before, but uprated in value to One Pound, 1.50p, Two Pounds and Five Pounds. These were printed by Harrisons in recess on their Giori press, the first time this machine had been used for printing British stamps.

1977 £1 imperforate pair

COMMEMORATIVES — 1953-1989

When Queen Elizabeth acceded to the throne in 1952, the policy that commemoratives should only be issued for Royal, National or International events was confirmed. In the first ten years of the new reign, ten sets were issued, but towards the end of that period, although the purpose for which the stamps were issued was maintained, the numbers began to increase. The stage was set for a change of outlook.

When Anthony Wedgewood-Benn became Postmaster General in 1964, he proposed that the number of special issues should be increased and that, although the direct connection with specific events should be maintained for some issues, others showing writers, artists, flora and fauna and similar themes should also be commissioned. He also proposed that stamps of this type should no longer carry the Queen's head so as to present a less cluttered appearance. Essays of these trials still exist in the National Postal Museum, but none were ever issued.

The first set without a direct commemorative purpose was the Landscape issue of 1966 and this was followed by a period when 'special issues' represented the bulk of the releases. In 1966, Christmas stamps appeared for the first time. These have reappeared annually ever since. Other regular features now are the CEPT issue and a set of flora or fauna. In 1968, a 'General Anniversaries' issue was released and these unlinked series continued until 1972.

After decimalisation, the policy became established that there would be 7 to 8 sets each year and each subject would take about four stamps. The face values of these stamps would pay the first class letter rate, the European letter rate and the B and C Zones airmail rates. If a fifth stamp was needed it was either the airmail postcard rate or the second class letter rate (Christmas only). The first of these sets with a single designer had been the 1964 Shakespeare set (with an additional 2/6 value).

In 1987, the rate to EEC countries was reduced to the same level as the internal postage rate. As a result there was less demand for the European letter rate and from the Pottery issue of that year that value was replaced by the airmail postcard rate. There are

exceptions to this rule and occasional single values, usually at the Zone C airmail rate have also been released.

Royal events have not passed unrecorded. After the Coronation in 1953, there was the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969, the Silver Wedding in 1972, the Wedding of Princess Anne in 1973, the Silver Jubilee in 1977, the 25th anniversary of the Coronation in 1978, the 80th birthday of the Queen Mother in 1980, the Wedding of the Prince of Wales in 1981 and the Wedding of the Duke of York in 1986.

The Queen's Head: From 1953 to 1966, all commemoratives were designed to include the Wilding Head. Although this head continued to be used on the definitive issues until 1967, the head for commemoratives was changed in May 1966 for the Landscapes issue. This used the Mary Gillick coinage head adapted by David Gentleman. This was used in silhouette, sometimes embossed, until the Bridges issue of 1968 when it appeared as a relief design which has been used occasionally ever since. The size of the head and the length of the neck to the bust has been varied to suit the individual designs, but this head has since been used for the majority of issues.

Special designs for the Queen's Head were used for the 1972 Silver Wedding, the 1977 Silver Jubilee and the 50p for the 1980 International Stamp Exhibition.

Printers and Printing: The vast majority of the issues from 1953 have been printed by Harrisons in photogravure, but there have been some exceptions. The 2/6 values for the 1964 Shakespeare and the 1966 Westminster Abbey were printed in recess by Bradbury Wilkinson. In 1969-70, two sets, the Post Office Technology and the Ninth Commonwealth Games were printed by the Delacryl process of De La Rue, this was a form of lithography. In 1973, the Inigo Jones and Parliamentary Conference sets were printed by Bradbury Wilkinson in a mixture of typography and lithography or recess and typography.

In 1975, Harrisons printed the Sailing issue in a mixture of photogravure and recess. This was not a success and there was a shortage of the high value. The 50p 1980 Stamp Exhibition was printed in recess by Harrisons but again there were problems.

Since then three sets have appeared with a mixture of photogravure and recess, with the recess vignettes being engraved by Slania of Sweden. These were the 1982 Maritime Heritage, the 1984 Mail Coach and the 1987 Victorian issue.

In 1980 it became the policy for one issue each year to be printed in lithography. The first of these was the Sports Centenaries printed by the House of Questa; followed by Waddington's Duke of Edinburgh Award in 1981; Questa's British Motor Cars in 1982; British Gardens by Waddington in 1983; and so on. The Safety at Sea issue in 1985 was Waddington's last set as the security printing for the group was combined after Questa was taken over by Waddington in 1984.

Colour and Shape: From 1953, the same pattern was followed as for the commemoratives of the 1940s. The stamps were generally double the size of a normal definitive, in either horizontal or vertical format and were printed in a single colour. The first CEPT or Europa issue appeared in 1960 and, for the first time since 1911, a two coloured stamp was issued. In any event it was the first two coloured photogravure stamp to be released in this country. From that time, two or more colours have generally been used on all commemorative issues and even as many as nine as in the 1966 Battle of Hastings set.

Initially size was resticted to overlength stamps i.e. three times definitive stamp size (2/6 Simon de Montfort of 1965), but as printing technology improved, the variation in size available to the designers increased. The extremes were the Information Technology issue in 1982 at the large end and the first square stamp issued for the Heraldry issue in 1984 at the other.

Se-tenant Stamps: To increase the variety of designs which could be included in a set, occasionally issues of commemorative and special issue stamps were designed with more than one design on a sheet of stamps. The first such release was the Battle of Britain issue of 1965, where the low value was issued in a block of six different stamps. This was followed by several issues including the British Ships and the Cathedrals issues in the 1960's There was also the Dickens commemorative of 1970.

After decimalisation, this system was used more sparingly. The first issue was the Inigo Jones issue in 1973 followed by the European Architecture of 1975. Christmas stamps, flora and fauna, anniversaries, CEPT etc.; all have been treated in this fashion.

1980 Railway Anniversary se-tenant pair

Miniature Sheets and Charity stamps: The British Post Office did not use any surcharges as a means of raising funds until the Health and Handicap Charities issue in 1975. This was a 4½p stamp with a 1½p surcharge. The intention was to pass the funds to the charities but the public only purchased a quarter of the stamps printed and the idea was shelved.

1979 Death Centenary of Sir Rowland Hill, the second Post Office miniature sheet bearing the 10p surcharge for the 1980 exhibition

For the International Stamp Exhibition in 1980, the Post Office agreed to raise money to provide support for the organisers and three miniature sheets were issued in 1978, 1979 and 1980 with surcharges of 10p, 10p and 25p respectively. The funds raised not only provided the money to cover the short-fall in the income at the exhibition, but also provided a surplus that was used to set up the British Philatelic trust for the benefit of Philately.

A similar departure has been arranged for the support of London Stamp World 1990, and miniature sheets were issued in 1988 and 1989. A further sheet is advised for May 1990. The 1989 sheet was a further move away from tradition as the stamps in the miniature sheet were not the same as those issued for sheet sales.

The Post Office decided to have a further attempt at surcharging stamps for charity in 1989 when a 1p was added to all the values of the Christmas issue except for the second class value which was available both with and without the charge. It is too early to say whether this has been a success. However, indications would seem to show that these were not well supported.

Designers: At the beginning of the reign, the appointment of designers for issues was fairly arbitrary. Most usually, a different designer was used for each value. This had the disadvantage that there was no real coordination of the design from one stamp to another. This had been true in the 1940s and it was equally true in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The first designer to complete a whole set of more than two stamps was Michael Goaman in 1961 with the second CEPT issue. This was a great exception. It was followed by other sets on a similar theme with single designers but the outstanding success of this period was the work of David Gentleman. His first stamp issue was the National Productivity Year in 1962. This was followed by the Lifeboat Conference the following year where, with great perversity, the Committee managed to select two designs from one set submitted and the 1/6 from a totally different set so that the three stamps did not have the uniformity which the designer had intended.

Gentleman has continued to design for the Post Office and his most recent issue was the Christmas set of 1989, a continuing contact of more than 25 years.

Other designers who have designed a number of sets are Fritz Wegner, Ron Maddox, Peter Sharland, Adrian George and many others. Their names as artists stand out in their own right and they have added to the quality of design of British stamps.

After David Gentleman, however, the most influential designer has been Jeffery Matthews. His first set was a Postage Due issue in 1970, but he has worked on many commemoratives and his assistance in the modernisation of the variations of the Machin issue as well as the Royal issues for the Weddings in 1981 and 1986 and the Heraldry issues of 1982 and 1987 has kept his name to the forefront of British stamp designers.

The story of the commemoratives of the last 32 years is complex, but it has shown a turning point not only in the attitude of the Post Office towards the collector but also in their attitude to the commissioning of the Arts. The creation of the Philatelic Bureau in 1964, the provision of special posting facilities and the use of First Day of Issue postmarks indicate one side of this coin, but one must not forget the patronage awarded to many aspiring young artists which has enhanced our collections and given them a start on the ladder.

It is not possible to state categorically whether the changes of the last twenty five years have helped or hindered the collecting of British postage stamps. However, one thing we certainly know is that it has helped the British Post Office to be the only profitable postal service in the West, if not the whole world!

(continued from page 23)

Letters to and from Members of Parliament and certain Government Officials were probably carried free from the start of the post, but there is no written authority for this until 1652. This was a much abused system costing the Post Office dearly. A cartoon is known showing a Mail Coach carrying 47 lbs of free mail, 273 lbs of Newspaper, which also went free, and only 34 lbs of paid mail. Free mail had its own postmarks from 1764 until 1840 when the privilege was finally ended.

Overseas mail was dealt with by two departments of the Post Office. The Ship Letter Office handled all mail carried to and from GB in private ships, whilst the Foreign Branch Office handled mail carried by Official Packet vessels. The purist will tell you that Postal History came to an end in 1840, with the introduction of adhesive stamps, but this, of course is not so. The history of the machine cancellations, the many and various postmarks of the 19th century, the mechanisation of the sorting of mail, air routes, etc, are all continuing parts of Postal History today.

Chronology up to 1840

1635	Royal Post opened to the General Public
1661	Henry Bishop appointed Postmaster General Bishops Marks issued
1670	Bishops Marks used in Dublin
1680	Dockwra started London Penny Post
1682	Penny Post closed down, and re-opened by Post Office
1693	Bishops Marks used in Edinburgh
1713	First PAID stamps used
1720	Provincial handstamps brought into use Bye Posts started by Ralph Allen
1764	First 'FREE' marks
1766	First Ship Letter marks
1784	Mail Coaches started by John Palmer
1794	Re-organisation of the Post Office
1801	Fifth Clause Post. London Penny Post raised to 2d
1805	London Post to and from the Country area raised to 3d
1829	Branch Office of the London Twopenny Post opened at: Lombard St., Vere St., Boro and Charing Cross
1839	December. Universal 4d Post
1840	January. Universal 1d Post
1840	1d Black adhesive stamps issued

POSTAGE DUES

Although Postage Due stamps were in use in France as early as 1859, the British authorities did not feel that it was necessary to use such labels and relied on handstamps until 1914. It is possible that the surcharging of the massive numbers of post-cards which were 'Contrary to Regulations' caused the Post Office to rethink the situation.

A Post Office Circular of 14 April 1914 announced that four values, ½d, 1d, 2d and 5d would be issued on 20 April. The design was prepared by G.W. Eve who had also designed some of the frames for the King George V low values. Initial supplies were printed by Somerset House and the plates were then passed to Harrisons.

As postage rates changed, new values were included into the range. Before the contract was passed to Waterlows in 1924, a 1½d (1922), 3d (1918), 4d (1920) and 1/- (1915) had been added. After 1924, the 2/6 To Pay label was included and so it remained until 1951 when the colours of the main values were changed. Harrisons regained the contract in 1934.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, a 6d (1962), 8d (1968), 5/- (1955), 10/- (1963) and One Pound (1963) were included. The issues were all printed by typography until 1968 when the 8d and 4d (1969) were printed by photogravure.

The period of the first design (1914-1970) was the longest for any continuous design in British philatelic history. The Watermark changed on a number of occasions:

1914-24 - Simple Cypher
1924-36 - Block Cypher
1936-37 - E VIII R
1937-52 - G VI R
1954-55 - Tudor Crown
1955-57 - St Edward's Crown
1957-68 - Crowns only

In 1970 a new design was introduced for the introduction of decimal currency. Designed by Jeffery Matthews, the range was initially limited to values with direct decimal equivalents - 10p, 20p, 50p, One and Five Pounds. The other values were issued on 15 February 1971, and other values appeared as the rates changed - a 7p in 1974 and an 11p in 1975.

A further issue designed by Sedley Place Designs was issued in 1982.