

STAMP DEFINITIVES

## GEORGE VI HIGH VALUES

1939-48



On the accession of King George VI in December 1936, the GPO gave priority to issuing new definitives in the most used lower denominations and a special Coronation stamp, so no discussion of new high value stamps took place for some months. As early as 30 April 1937, however, W T Wiggins-Davies, describing himself as 'a collector of nothing but Great Britain unused Postage Stamps, and also being interested in art', submitted essays of an unsolicited design to the Postmaster General (PMG), Major G C Tryon. These essays were printed in photogravure from a plate that Wiggins-Davies had produced at some expense, and comprised three card-mounted sets, one in brown and two in other colours, in the values 2/6d, 5/-, 10/- and '20/-' (rather than '£1'). This was 20 years after the previous £1 definitives were withdrawn from sale, although a small number of the 1929 PUC £1, never formally withdrawn, may still have been available. The design revived the tradition of corner lettering ('G R K E', for 'George Rex King Emperor') and the essays were printed on un gummed 'very thin bank paper'. The PMG acknowledged receipt of the essays which were 'retained under consideration' - although this turned out to be a long process.

The first low value and Coronation stamps were released in early May 1937 and discussion on the high value range began on 13 May at a meeting of R F Fanshawe and D P Dell of the Stores Department and A R Kidner, the Director of Postal Services (DPS), plus other officials. It was agreed that something less elaborate than the 'Seahorses' design in current use was desirable, although not necessarily as plain as the new low values. However, the present oblong format (1.71 inches across by 1.05 inches down - approximately 43.5mm by 26.5mm)

of the high values did not lend itself to good design, so it was important to settle first on a new shape and size. For shape the DPS favoured the so-called 'Australian' format of 1.15625 inches (29.5mm) across by 1.3125 inches (34mm) down, the 1867 Victorian 5s and 1902 Edward VII 2s 6d being cited as examples. The actual size should be the same or a little larger, and it was thought that this could effectively be achieved by a reduction of the gutters and margin from the present 3.5mm overall to give a greater print area to the design.

On 3 June Dell and Fanshawe explained these requirements to Philip Waterlow of Waterlow and Sons Ltd, the GPO's contracted printers for line engraved high value stamps since 1934. On 11 June Waterlow replied that the company could produce stamps of the required size in sheets of either 40 or 48, with a minimum gutter per stamp of 3mm; in subsequent discussions, however, Waterlow's chief technical expert, S G Clifford, thought that 3.5mm was a practical minimum and 4mm preferable. It was decided to retain the 3.5mm gutter, giving a design surface of 26mm across by 30.5mm down. In a memorandum to the Postal Services Department (PSD) on 18 June, Fanshawe explained that, as to the design itself, Waterlows would willingly undertake this unless the GPO wished to open it to competition, in which case the company would allow its staff artists to submit individual entries. A few days later the Post Office Board discussed the high values while looking at specimens in both the preferred and current shapes and sizes; there was some liking for the 'Seahorses' design, and for this reason it was decided to seek new designs in both formats.

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## **COUNCIL FOR ART AND INDUSTRY APPROACHED**

On 2 July the DPS invited the co-operation of Frank Pick, vice chairman of the London Passenger Transport Board, and Chairman of the Council for Art and Industry (CAI) which had already given advice and assistance in the choice of low value and Coronation designs. Pick replied on 5 July that he would be glad to help and would raise the topic at the next CAI meeting; his immediate suggestion was that Eric Gill's 'floral emblems' design for the low values might be developed further 'on the basis of the old Tasmanian stamp'. This was a reference to the 1855 6d, an octagonal design that Pick had previously proposed as a model for the low values (interestingly it was not dissimilar in concept to Edmund Dulac's later design for these). After this prompt offer of assistance, little occurred for the next two months; the proposed 'Tasmanisation' of Gill's design was not pursued either by Pick or the GPO. However, another suggestion emerged during this period when a representative of the College of Arms indicated that its own artists might be called on for designs - the GPO acted on this idea in the fullness of time, although not as an immediate consequence of this first proposal. It was also decided to take up Waterlow's option of a 40-stamp sheet, as 'convenient for money calculations'; this would be four across by ten down in the current high value format or eight across by five down in the dimensions favoured to replace it.

The CAI's Stamp Committee discussed informally high value designs in early September before holding a full meeting on 21 July that the DPS and A G Tydeman (the Controller of Stores) attended as GPO representatives. It was agreed that the artists Stephen Gooden, MacDonald Gill and Edmund Dulac be invited to submit designs; Gooden was a respected small-scale engraver and recently appointed associate member of the Royal Academy; Gill a Fellow of the RIBA and the brother of Eric Gill who had designed the 'floral emblems' stamps; and Edmund Dulac, the designer of the 1½d Coronation stamp. Gill was to be asked for a design in the 'Edward VII' (vertical) format using a map of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as the background, while Gooden was asked for an allegorical design with the figure of Mercury in the horizontal or 'Seahorses' format, as in current use. Dulac, however, would be given a free hand as to format and content. The basic colours for all three values would be those in regular use – 2s 6d brown, 5s red, 10s blue – but might be slightly deepened. Although the required dimensions of the stamps had not yet been finalised, this would be included in the formal instructions to artists.

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## DESIGNS REQUESTED FROM ARTISTS

The instructions went out on 7 October – the three artists were given the GPO's basic requirements, namely, a 'portrait or effigy' of the King, the word 'postage', and the value no more than twice in clear numerals, although it might also appear in words. It was explained that the actual effigy used would be supplied by the GPO (in fact the photogravure stamp printers Harrison and Sons had already, on 1 October, provided copies of the Dulac profile as used on the low values, for engraving by Waterlows). Artwork was to be in six times the size the design would appear on an actual stamp, excluding the 3.5mm gutter, which meant in effect 183mm down by 156mm across in the vertical format or 138mm down by 240 mm across horizontal. A fee of 15 guineas (£15.75) would be paid for each design submitted, plus an extra 50 guineas (£52.50) if accepted.

In subsequent correspondence the GPO dealt directly with Dulac, with whom they were on good terms, while the CAI acted as the intermediary with Stephen Gooden (with whom their previous relations had not been happy). On 28 October Dulac supplied two stamp size sketches, one in each format, with the explanation that he would prepare a full size drawing of whichever was preferred; Gooden's design was received by the CAI on 25 October, and Gill's by 3 November. Apparently all submitted designs were in the 10s value, although this is uncertain in Gill's case as there is no copy in the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA). These were seen by the CAI Stamp Committee, again with Tydeman and Kidner present, on 10 November; Gill's design was found unsuitable (later the DPS bluntly described it as 'perfectly useless'). It was decided to proceed with Gooden's horizontal

design depicting Mercury and St George, and Dulac's vertical design based, as was his horizontal sketch, on the royal Coat of Arms.

It was felt that modifications were required to both designs; in Dulac's case these involved reducing the size of both the Arms and the King's head. In a letter to the DPS on 15 November Tydeman described how Dulac had first objected on the grounds that this would not only disrupt the overall design but also create unnecessary blanks between the value figures in the top corners and the heads of his lion and unicorn supporting the Arms. However, he agreed with the suggestion that the crown be reduced in size and transferred from the King's head to atop the Arms, and produced a revised drawing that Tydeman enclosed. The following day Kidner replied that the Director General (DG), Sir Thomas Gardiner, liked the revised design, preferred it to the original, although he suggested that the crowding of the design could be relieved by omitting the crown altogether – 'as there is no crown in the present design of the high value stamps, there seems to be no reason why one should appear in the new issue'.

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#### **DIFFICULTIES WITH STEPHEN GOODEN**

The next day, 17 November, Frank Pick and Sydney Lee of the CAI had 'a difficult meeting' with Stephen Gooden, in discussing the modification of his design. In an earlier letter to Lee on 23 September, the artist explained that he had previously fallen out with the GPO when asked to submit designs for the Silver Jubilee issue of 1935, and would only consent to participate on the present occasion for reasons of the dignity recently conferred on him – 'any Member of the Royal Academy ought to be only too glad to give his best services to any matter of national importance such as the countries [sic] Postage Stamps'. He also assumed that the involvement of the CAI would moderate the GPO's usual 'stringent conditions', which were the chief cause of his critical attitude toward them, other factors being their allegedly parsimonious fees, use of photogravure, and insistence on copyright over all work submitted. He was thus naturally discomfited to discover that Pick and Lee had no power other than to accept any strictures imposed by the GPO. He was now asked to make various alterations to his original design; while agreeing to two of these and to considering a third, he was adamant - rightly, in Pick's view - that he did not wish to make any changes before seeing his design reduced to stamp size as the effect might be 'to alter the balance and colour values across the stamp'. The parts of the design requiring changes are not specified in the files but appear to have included conspicuous white areas, which Gooden thought might be less apparent on stamp paper. In a letter dated 19 November Pick requested Tydeman to supply a 'photographic print of the drawing to the exact size of the stamp' on appropriate paper so that Gooden could execute the necessary changes; he also warned that the artist expected to engrave the stamp himself and make further amendments as these occurred to him.

On 23 November, however, Tydeman was further told by the DPS that the PMG, DG, and Sir Walter Womersley (the Assistant PMG) had now all seen Gooden's design and were unanimous that it was not suitable; Kidner felt that the CAI should be urged to abandon it rather than press Gooden to make further alterations. The PMG was an admirer of the 'Seahorses' design and the DPS thought it 'quite on the cards that we shall be pressed to either use that design again or to produce something of the same nature'. This was conveyed to Pick, who reacted next day with some alarm:

I would like to urge upon you the desirability of trying this stamp, if only at one value ... It certainly falls well within the 18th century tradition of engraved design. It is based on bookplate design, but there seems to be no reason at all why this should not be transferred to stamps. If Mr Steven [sic] Gooden would undertake the engraving of the plate I think we may be quite sure of having a craftsmanlike stamp which will have quality and distinction ... I hope, therefore, that even if the Postmaster General is not altogether pleased with the design he will not prevent your having one stamp ... merely to test what public reaction is to a well engraved and well designed stamp of this sort.

On 25 November, however, the DPS was formally instructed to advise Pick that any pursuit of Gooden's design must be his own responsibility.

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## ERIC GILL'S THOUGHTS ON STAMP DESIGN

In the meantime the artist Eric Gill had also been invited to contribute designs, apparently in response to his own approach, and sent a set of the instructions on 13 November. On 19 November Waterlows was also sent copies of the instructions following a telephone discussion with Tydeman the previous day, but declined in the event as neither the firm nor individual artists could meet the 1 December deadline. Eric Gill's design was first completed by 25 November but had to be redrawn when he realised it was to be reproduced by line engraving rather than photogravure; it was available in time for the meeting with the CAI Stamp Committee on 2 December. In a letter to Tydeman on 3 December Gill explained that his idea had been to extend the 'floral emblems' theme of his low value designs: Because a stamp costs 2/6 or 5/- or 10/- it is a more glorious affair than a mere twopenny stamp. It costs more. Therefore it is bigger in size. Therefore there is more room for glorification. Therefore I suggest that the extra space be simply filled with a sort of halo of acanthus leafage ... in the traditional manner ... The acanthus ... more than any other, lends itself to this purpose of glorification.

He was dismissive of the 'highly elaborate pictorial-symbolical' tradition of stamp design: (a) The Rule Britannia [sic] motif is 'shy-making' to say the least.

(b) On the other hand any really truthful symbols of the modern British Empire would be considered offensive, eg, the head of the King in the middle & on the left, the 'Bankers in board room assembled' &, on the right, the swooping flight of air bombers defending the trade routes by bombing Berlin ...

At the meeting of 2 December the CAI chose Dulac's revised design omitting the crown as suitable for the 2s 6d and 5s values, in preference to the version with the crown placed on top of the Arms (the crown was thought too small). Eric Gill's design was generally agreed to be unsuitable and 'too flat' (the DPS decided on 6 December not to proceed with it). Regarding Gooden's design the GPO representatives, Fanshawe of Stores and the DPS, warned that it was not acceptable to the PMG. The CAI members regretted this attitude, and hoped it still might be used for the 10s value; they felt it to be a good design which would display itself more effectively in a reduced size, and reiterated their request for a stamp-sized reduction of the design on stamp paper, in the hope that if improvements were pursued the PMG might alter his decision. Kidner and Fanshawe reluctantly acceded to this, and suspected the CAI of being over-influenced by the prestige of a figure of Gooden's standing – 'they were pleased they had been able to get Gooden interested, and they were anxious to accept the design, possibly in order to keep on the right side of him'.

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## GOODEN VERSUS THE GPO

Stamp-size reductions photographed on ordinary matt paper were duly provided, while Waterlows produced bromides of the design in two blocks of four (one matt and one glossy) on 6 December. A large number of lithographed colour essays in blue (apparently 80 in all) were supplied the following day; from subsequent comment it seems these did not do the design justice. Frank Pick was supplied with copies of the bromides plus at least one essay, which in subsequent correspondence with Gooden he variously referred to as 'a trial proof' and 'a photo-litho of the drawing on printed stamp paper'. On 14 December, however, Pick was told that the PMG would not 'under any circumstances' consider Gooden's design any further, and this was confirmed in a letter from the DPS the following day. Pick accepted the situation, and notified Gooden on 21 December; he hoped to 'come to some arrangement with Mr Gooden to finish off the stamp as a publicity stamp and use it experimentally myself for the Transport Board ... I certainly should like to try out an engraved stamp of the finest character.' In a letter to Gooden on 31 December he expressed the hope that the CAI might still co-operate with the artist 'to show the Post Office that the stamp has qualities which they will not otherwise get'.

This did not come to pass, however, as Gooden was exclusively concerned with the fact that, as far as he could gather from Pick, the GPO had first taken his design to the essay stage without his having been consulted since mid-November, and then abandoned it with

the minimum of explanation. A long and acrimonious correspondence followed, first between Gooden and the CAI, and later between the GPO and Gooden's solicitors, raising such issues as copyright and the lowly scale of remuneration for postage stamp design; this finally ended in March 1938 when Gooden's design was returned to him after a mutual agreement to abandon his claims to payment and the GPO's to copyright. Although frequently invited subsequently to submit designs, Gooden refused on every occasion except 1952, when he produced two drawings for the Elizabeth II high values issue; even on that occasion his involvement was almost terminated by a similar clash.

On 23 December Dulac supplied a full size drawing of his revised design as favoured by the CAI; as well as omitting the crown he had slightly reduced the size of the head and improved the general detail of the design. This was shown to the DPS, and handed to Waterlows next day for stamp size bromides and coloured litho prints to be prepared. Mr Dell of Stores reported in a memorandum that the printers had expressed certain reservations:

Mr Clifford thought the drawing an excellent one and the design striking ... Dulac had got his effect by contrasting the solid above the shield with the rest of the stamp. The stamp, however, was more suitable for photogravure reproduction than for line engraved. The solid would lose something by engraving ... The head was too small in relation to the size of the stamp and while not so noticeable in the drawing, it would probably be apparent in stamp size. [In a footnote to the memorandum dated 29 December it was noted that J A C Harrison, Waterlow's engraver, also considered the design 'a poor one from the engraving point of view'.]

Another problem was that the absence of distinct value panels would necessitate separate designs for the 2s 6d, 5s and 10s, rather than one common design for all three denominations. The printers had also been asked if the lithograph essays could be made less dark and heavy in appearance than had those of the Gooden design; Clifford explained that this could not be done without change to the original due to the photographic nature of the litho process.

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## **DULAC DESIGN ACCEPTED**

On 18 January 1938 the PMG, together with the DG and Assistant PMG, saw Dulac's revised high value design and pronounced it satisfactory; a statement by the DPS at this meeting that the design would be essayed in photogravure was in error. Waterlows supplied litho essays on 21 January - these included six blocks of four each in red, brown and blue, plus 19 singles. The sheets making up this order also seem to have included further specimens of the Gooden design essay, presumably for comparison purposes only at this stage. The essays were seen by the DG on 14 February and the PMG on 15 February, and approved; it

was agreed that they should be shown to the Royal Fine Arts Commission (RFAC). Tydeman and the DPS took them to a meeting with the RFAC on 17 February. The feeling of the meeting was generally favourable, except that the word 'postage' appeared cramped; it was suggested that this could be improved by inserting a line of colour under the word, raising the Arms and King's head, and slightly reducing the size of the value figures. It was agreed that the design was better for omitting the crown, but some doubt was expressed as to whether this was heraldically permissible, and also whether the Arms should be shown together with the King's head. The meeting recommended that the College of Arms be consulted.

On the following day Kidner spoke to the PMG on this last matter and a meeting was arranged for the same day between D P Dell and George Bellew, Registrar of the College and Somerset Herald of Arms. Bellew stated that it was incorrect to omit the crown if the Arms were shown and also as 'supporters', namely the lion and unicorn, appeared, the Garter should be included in the design. The Arms could be used alone without supporters or the Garter, as on the new half-crown coin. He indicated that the College was prepared to submit heraldic designs of its own, which would of course be correct, and gave Dell a rough sketch showing the four quarters of the Arms on a light background around a central oval with a dark background, on which the King's head would be placed.

The Controller of Stores advised Kidner of this conversation on 21 February with the warning that 'if we wish to use the complete Coat of Arms we shall probably have to use the present oblong shaped stamp ... I might ask Dulac to give us a design on these lines with the King's head in an oval on the left and the Royal Arms on the right and at the same time give the College of Arms an opportunity of submitting a design.' Other alternatives were to pursue Dulac's present design and reduce the Arms and head in size while incorporating the crown and Garter, or to revert to the PMG's preference for a more or less modified version of the current 'Seahorses'. This last suggestion seems to have been passed to Dulac, as on 1 March the artist sent Tydeman a drawing showing the head in an oval frame between two seahorses, plus a pair of stylised wings to symbolise 'transport of mail by air as well as on water' - he thought that this would be 'quite free from possible interference on the part of the heralds'. On 18 March, however, Dulac agreed to redraw his 'Arms' design to embody the crown and Garter, after the DPS indicated that he did not favour his version of the 'Seahorses' theme; the revised drawing was received on 2 April. Dulac later commented on this revision:

As long as the different elements of the coat of arms are shown in their proper places, colours and attitudes the artist is free to interpret them in any style he chooses provided he commits no anachronism ... The shield (surrounded by the Garter) the Crown and the supporters are all that is necessary for ordinary official use. They are thus shown on the covers of passports, on police stationery and Income Tax demands.

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## DESIGNS BY COLLEGE OF ARMS

Tydeman wrote to the College of Arms on 22 February with an invitation to prepare designs, in either the 23mm by 40mm or 30.5mm by 26mm format. Five preparatory designs were received on 11 March; these appear to have been the work of a number of the College staff artists, some producing treatments of rough sketches by Bellew and others using their own ideas. Bellew described these as follows:

1. The rose, thistle, daffodil and shamrock are depicted, with sprigs of laurel.
2. An artistic design of 'Adam' character. The cornucopias, symbols of prosperity, are filled with fruit, corn and the Royal Emblems.
3. The Royal 'Standard' of the King's Arms forms a background for the portrait of his majesty and the inscription.
4. A design which bears no emblems except the Crown.
5. This is perhaps the most progressive design. The motif is the double rose of England, known as the 'Tudor' rose. The inner rose is the white rose of York. Upon the inner rose in this design is placed His Majesty's portrait. His Majesty, when Duke of York, used as a badge such a rose.

No. 3 was basically Bellew's own concept as sketched for Dell of Stores on 18 February, although the submitted drawing was apparently the work of a Mr Verco at the College, who was also Bellew's secretary. The daffodil was used on both nos 1 and 2 as an emblem of Wales; although Bellew had criticised this during the development of the low value designs a year earlier, he was later emphatic in claiming no. 1 as entirely 'composed and drawn by myself and then redrawn by a draftsman'. In a letter written the following year Bellew described design no. 1 in more detail:

The King's head is placed within a conventional cartouche of decorative design. Surrounding this, on either side, are branches of laurel, which have become almost established as a traditional decoration in English stamps, for they appear in many of the issues of Their late Majesties King George V, King Edward VII and Queen Victoria. In the four corners are the well-known emblems denoting the three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland and the Principality of Wales. Above the cartouche is set the Imperial Crown. [Bellew to PSD, 6 June 1939.]

No. 2 included the initials 'G. C.' in the bottom corners. All designs showed the 10/- denomination except no. 5 (5/-). According to a note of 9 March the rather rough head of George VI used on all five designs was a direct photocopy of that on the issued low values.

After seeing the designs on 18 March, Tydeman instructed that Waterlows be asked to essay nos 1, 3 and 5, each in red, brown and blue. These were duly supplied on 24 March,

the printers rating the designs' suitability for subsequent engraving as first, no. 5; second, no. 3; third, no. 1. These were first seen by the DG on 29 March and then on 31 March by the PMG, who chose nos 1 and 3 as 'worth pursuing'. He asked for further essays of the two drawings to be prepared bringing out their salient points more clearly, as the reproductions of neither compared in quality to those of Dulac's design. Consulted the following day, Clifford of Waterlows felt that the College's drawings were 'lifeless and lacking in contrast', whereas Dulac's technique was far ahead: he was able to draw a stamp with the necessary light and shade to give a superior result. He doubted that the College could produce anything of the required quality unless it was shown Dulac's original and encouraged to imitate his technique. At a meeting with Tydeman on 12 April, it was pointed out to Bellew that the designs would need a bolder contrast of light and shade to reproduce satisfactorily when essayed by lithography, and thus he took Dulac's original drawing and a stamp size copy as an aid to improving the College's designs. At this meeting Bellew also saw Dulac's revised drawing of 2 April incorporating the crown and Garter, and confirmed it heraldically correct; litho prints of the revised design in red, brown and blue were requested from Waterlows on the same day.

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## DULAC AND COLLEGE DESIGNS ESSAYED

On 21 April Harrison and Sons, printers of the photogravure low values, supplied matt and glossy bromides of the King's head in two sizes, 3¼ inches and 3¾ inches from top of the hair to base of the neck, for use by the College. A first batch of new Dulac essays was received the same day, but found to be 28.5mm by 24mm rather than 30.5mm by 26mm as required. Essays in the correct size (six blocks of four in each colour - 72 essays in all) followed shortly and reached PSD on 29 April. Bellew supplied revised drawings of the two College of Arms designs on 28 April - 'both greatly simplified and much greater depth of tone has been employed'. Waterlows furnished essays of these on 5 May (four blocks of four in each colour - 96 essays) found to be 'a considerable improvement'. These, plus subsequent drawings and lithograph essays, were now in the 2s 6d value. A common fault of all the essays now to hand was a dark patch behind the King's head, but it was accepted that 'the photo-litho process does not give a good reproduction' and even accentuated imperfections, although acceptable for essaying purposes. On 10 May the DPS informed Tydeman that the PMG favoured no. 1 of the two College designs, but still thought Dulac's superior to either.

The revised essays were shown to the RFAC on 16 June by the DPS and Fanshawe: neither College design was favoured, but the meeting found Dulac's design 'generally satisfactory', with certain reservations. Principally, the rendering of the 'supporters' was markedly less strong than that of the head; after discussion it was felt that rather than strengthening the lion and unicorn, the shading under the chin and behind the ear should be softened in tone.

It was noticed that the line of colour under 'postage', recommended by the RFAC and accepted by the GPO in February, had still not been inserted; the Stores Department noted as early as 20 May that this had yet to be done, but could be remedied by either Dulac or the engraver in the normal course of work. The 16 June meeting came to the same conclusion, and similarly with regard to the dark patch behind the King's head. The lettering of 'postage' was criticised, however, and also the 2s 6d value figures, which were found 'too big and unbecoming', and 'likened to the price figures in a grocer's shop'. Finally there was comment on the intended colours; the brown (described as sepia) was acceptable, the blue (blue-grey or indigo) agreed as satisfactory despite some dissent, and the red acceptable in itself subject to the proviso that its replacement by a green similar to that of the ½d should be considered.

Dulac's revised drawing following the RFAC's comments was completed on 19 June; he slightly strengthened the lion and unicorn, but remarked: 'The head is supposed to be a low relief whereas the animals, shield and lettering are flat decorative ornaments. I do not feel I can give the supporters greater modelling without making of them 3-dimensional objects standing in space.' He marginally reduced 'postage' and the value in size, but could not bring himself to adopt the 'very ordinary' style of figures for the 2s 6d which the RFAC had recommended in a rough sketch – 'it has been used too often by the hack designer'.

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## ESSAYS SUBMITTED TO THE KING

The revised drawing was given to Waterlows on 23 June and four blocks of four essays in red, brown and blue (48 in all) supplied on 30 June. On 11 July Tydeman showed the drawing, essays in each colour, and bromides in blue and brown tones to Lord Crawford and H C Bradshaw of the RFAC. The design was approved as it stood although the use of serifs on the lettering of 'postage' and an area of deep shadow under the chin were both questioned; when the PMG took the essays to Buckingham Palace on 21 July it was explained that the lettering would be improved at the engraving stage along with other details already mentioned. Essays (in brown) of the two College of Arms designs were handed over at the same time although the accompanying notes drew the King's attention to the prevailing preference for the Dulac design. On 26 July A Lascelles, the King's private secretary, replied on the King's behalf; the King considered the head in Dulac's design 'disproportionately large' and the Arms too diminutive. He was, however, disposed to approve the College's 'floral' design no. 1 provided the curved denomination panel were replaced by plain letters and figures as on design no. 3 (the Royal Standard). The PMG decided that both Dulac's 'Arms' and Bellew's 'floral' design should be modified accordingly and resubmitted.

It was realised on 9 August, in a discussion between the DPS and Fanshawe, that 'if the reproduction of the Royal Arms is enlarged there will be less space for the supporters,

which will therefore look thin and scraggy'. Dulac was given the new instructions on 19 August and wrote on 21 August that he was slightly enlarging the Arms and reducing the head as required, but 'it is impossible to squeeze in all the elements in the present size'; he suggested that the height and width could both be increased. He provided a rough sketch of a different arrangement with 'postage' at the top of the design measuring 33mm by 26mm ('Y'), and another on 23 August measuring 32.5mm by 27.5mm ('Z'). Both were seen by the DG, who disliked 'Z' and thought that the Arms in 'Y' as it stood seemed squashed by the lettering and other elements. In a memorandum of 24 August J Gould-Smith of PSD suggested to Dulac that he produce a fresh drawing in the original format ('X') with the changes requested by the King, and a full size drawing of 'Y', with a smaller crown so that the Arms had a less 'flattened' appearance. When Dulac supplied the two completed drawings on 6 September, he seems to have reverted to the original proportions (that is, 'X' rather than 'Y'). He commented on these that he had toned down the lion and unicorn and strengthened their lines a good deal in compensation – 'this will emphasize the general colour of the stamps, which is all to the good'. In addition, 'I have kept the Arms on the light side to increase further their importance.'

The College of Arms completed the revision of Bellew's design on 29 September; the daffodil and shamrock had been moved up from the bottom corners to make room for the new denomination panel. The three designs were sent to Waterlows for essaying on 5 October, described as 'B' (Dulac's with head and 'postage' smaller, and larger Arms), 'C' (as 'B' but with 'postage' at the top) and 'Z' (Bellew's original design no. 1, amended as suggested by the Palace on 26 July). On 12 October Waterlows returned essays of all three designs; as before, these were in blocks of four and in red, blue and brown. For some reason ten blocks of each design in red were supplied but only six blocks of each of the other colours; stamp size bromides of each design, both matt and glossy and in both sepia and blue tints, were also provided. In all 264 lithographed essays and 48 bromides were supplied.

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## **BELLEW AND DULAC DESIGNS ADOPTED**

The DPS preferred 'C' of the two Dulac designs, while as before both were preferred to Bellew's design 'Z'; the PMG took essays of all three to a further audience with the King on 16 November, although briefed to remind the King that the RFAC had firmly favoured Dulac. The King could not decide between 'B' and 'Z', even after consulting the Queen, and approved both designs. It was decided to use both on different values, and confirmed in a memorandum of 22 November, from the Deputy Director General (DDG), W R Birchall, that the PMG had decided to adopt the Dulac design for the 2s 6d and 5s and Bellew's for the 10s. He felt strongly that red should be used for the 5s and left the decision of colour open for the other values.

It was now considered urgent that Waterlow's engraver work on the stamps as soon as possible in case he became embroiled in other work. On 25 November Waterlows was asked to proceed with engraving first 'B' and then 'Z', arranging for the engraver to consult as necessary with the two artists to maintain the balance and contrast of their designs. After verifying the final drawings for size, the printers advised on 2 December that if both were reduced to the required height of 30.5mm, Bellew's would be 25.5mm wide instead of 26mm, and Dulac's 25mm. The firm was confident, however, that both designs could easily be widened by the marginal degree necessary, and neither artist had any difficulty over this. In January 1939 Bellew was asked to design a new 10s value tab to replace the 2s 6d on his final drawing, while Dulac was asked to produce figures for the 5s value; masks for both denominations were to hand by 19 January.

Some concern had been expressed that the cross on top of the crown projecting through the top border of Bellew's design might interfere with the perforations on the stamp; he solved this problem on 18 January by flattening the arc of the pearls and thus effectively reducing the crown's height. On 25 January Waterlow's engraver J A C Harrison and D P Dell met him at the College of Arms and discussed further improvements. Harrison suggested that the background in the central oval was too dense and gave the impression that the King's head was floating: if made dark grey instead of black it would remove this effect. The letters of 'postage' should be extended a little to balance better the value figures. Bellew supported both proposals and agreed that Harrison should implement them during engraving. Similar discussions between Harrison and Dulac are less documented but a Stores Department memorandum of 5 April recorded that the artist 'has been consulted on two occasions by Messrs. Waterlow's engraver regarding his own design and also the King's head (from Mr. Dulac's drawing) in the College of Arms design for the 10/- stamp'.

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## WATERLOW'S FIRST COLOUR PROOFS

Preliminary proofs in black of the 2s 6d and 5s designs were pulled on 31 March for inspection by both artist and engraver; the 2s 6d die was completed by 20 April, when colour trials were ordered in the following shades: Red CB, Red CG1, rose-red (shade of existing 5s); Blue ED, Blue EJ1, indigo (shade of existing 10s); Green FK1, Green FD1, Green FD; Brown HD, Brown HF, chocolate-brown (shade of existing 2s 6d). After seeing these the following day Dulac proposed two minor improvements to the die, namely, a slight lightening of the cheek and the removal of a spot in the parting of the hair; these were completed by 26 April, six proofs being pulled in a shade listed by Waterlows as Red CC. In a minute to PSD on 28 April Fanshawe made the following recommendations on colour after consulting Dulac:

2s 6d - 1st, Blue ED; 2nd, Green FK1 or chocolate-brown (shade of existing 2s 6d).  
5s -1st, Red CC; 2nd, Red CB.

He pointed out that while blue suited the design of the 2s 6d it was not an ideal colour for effective cancellation, and it might be better to choose the colours of the high value range from shades of brown, red and green. He added that green had been used for the £1 definitive issued between August 1913 and May 1917. Before making any final decision on colours, however, it would be better to await proofs of the 10s in May.

The DDG agreed on 3 May that the proofs of the final 2s 6d design in Red CC should be approved 'for design only', and that Waterlows could now proceed with the manufacture of printing plates. On 10 May proofs of the finished 10s die were pulled in black and shown by Harrison to Bellew at the College of Arms; on 13 May the printer was asked for colour trials in the same range of shades specified on 20 April, except that Red CC and CG were requested in place of CB and CG1. These were supplied on 17 May and seen by Bellew the following day; he indicated that he was not impressed with Blue EJ1 for the 10s and thought Green FK1 too similar to the ½d stamp, preferring the present indigo, Blue ED, or Green FD, in that order. He found the finished die quite satisfactory.

The following day Fanshawe told PSD in a memorandum that Stores thought the 10s design would show to better advantage in blue or green than brown or red; indigo or Green FK1 seemed of equal merit for the purpose. Indigo was slightly preferred because cancellation problems with that colour would arise less on Bellew's 10s than on the Dulac designs which had more solid colour. If indigo was chosen for the 10s then Stores would recommend Green FK1 for the 2s 6d and Red CC for the 5s. This recommendation was passed by Kidner to the DDG as it stood, except that he added that he thought the present colour of the 10s denomination rather dull, and suggested Blue 'EJ1' or if that was considered too bright Blue 'ED'. Birchall replied on 22 May that the PMG wished to retain the 2s 6d, 5s and 10s in shades of brown, red and blue respectively, and suggested indigo for the 10s, Red CC for the 5s, and either chocolate-brown or Brown HD for the 2s 6d. On 30 May it was confirmed by PSD that the choice of browns was now between the last two, and was to be left to Stores; after discussion Fanshawe opted for Brown HD. This shade was later described as 'rich' brown to distinguish it from the former 'chocolate' brown.

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## MASTER DIES APPROVED

Stores detected two minor imperfections on the 10s die - a light patch behind the ear of the head, and another between the ear and the parting of the hair: Harrison made the necessary alterations on 25 May. The 5s die was completed the same day; both dies were finally approved for design on 31 May, the 2s 6d having already been approved for design at the beginning of the month. The approved colours were also confirmed on 31 May: Brown HD

for the 2s 6d and Red CC for the 5s as on the 2s 6d colour proofs supplied on 21 and 26 April respectively, and indigo for the 10s as on the colour proof of 17 May.

It was hoped that supplies of all three new denominations would be available for issue by 14 August but problems arose when Waterlows on 29 June supplied two sheets of 2s 6d for approval by Stores. It was noticed at once that these were much lighter in colour than the approved standard; two more sheets were supplied on 3 July on which a considerable improvement had been achieved, although the colour was still somewhat lighter than approved. S G Clifford said that the improvement had been made by extracting the white from the pigment, but that attempts to approximate further to the desired shade by adding black might give the print a dirty appearance. Fanshawe (now Controller of Stores, since 1 June) saw the sheets on 4 July and stated that the comparative lightness of the background failed to 'throw up' the head, the lion and the unicorn and thus reproduce the brightness of the approved proof. Waterlows was requested to proceed with the addition of black pigment; the revised shade supplied on 3 July was now described as 'HD Brown minus white' to distinguish it from the Brown HD of 29 June, and was followed with further proofs in 'HD Brown minus white + 1 black' and 'HD Brown minus white + 2 black' on 6 July. 'HD Brown minus white + 3 black' followed on 10 July despite renewed warnings from Clifford that any further addition of black would not lead to improvement, and although these were a little brighter in appearance than earlier proofs, distinct traces of black were now visible in the pigment. A memorandum to Fanshawe from W S Mason of the Stamp Section, accompanying this last set of proofs, explained the technical difficulties:

The cross hatched lines of the background are thicker, and the area of white is consequently less, in the die proof than in the plate proofs because the die proof carries more ink. I think it is now clear that Waterlows cannot quite make up for the deficiency of ink in the background of the plate proofs by darkening the colour, and that any further attempts in this direction can only result in a definite departure from the approved brown ... Clifford assures me that the last possible adjustment has been made to the 'wipe' on the machine and that he cannot get any more ink into the background. He says, however, that after a few hundred sheets have been printed the background will print better and become more uniform. This should get rid of the 'patchy' effect and enhance the appearance of the stamps.

The memorandum recommended 'HD Brown minus white + 2 black', reminding Fanshawe that he had remarked on first seeing this particular result that 'if we had not seen the die proof, we might have thought ourselves lucky to get that'. Fanshawe's comments, on 11 July, were that 'the black shows up on the background in small spots but I hope that this will disappear to some extent when Waterlows get on the run. The shade of this print is the best so far and I think it must be approved.' The printers were notified the following day.

## CONTINUING COLOUR PROBLEMS

On 12 July Waterlows supplied two sheets of 5s stamps for approval of colour: these were in 'CC Red minus white', namely, the approved colour of the die proof with white extracted from the pigment. Once more Clifford was contacted and asked to produce a better match to the die proof by darkening the pigment, although again commented that adding further black would only spoil the print. His advice was again proved correct when one sheet in 'CC Red minus white + 1 black' and one in 'CC Red minus white + 2 black' were supplied on 17 July; the verdict was that 'the addition of the black turns the red colour definitely towards brown-red, and no improvement can, apparently, be affected by this means'. The colour of the initial plate proof was duly approved on the basis that it was as satisfactory an approximation to the die proof as that approved for the 2s 6d.

Similar events happened when plate proofs of the 10s were supplied on 13 July, plus an extra complication: 'The stamps were dull compared with the die proof. Not only was the background less dense but some of the depth of etch appeared to have been lost in transferring the engraving from the original die to the printing plate ... Further attempts to match the brightness of the die proof would have to be made.' Meanwhile the experiment of adding black to the blue pigment was tried unsuccessfully with a fresh set of proofs supplied on 18 July. On 21 July Mason visited Waterlows for further discussion, during which Clifford stated 'that the approved die proof of the 10/- was exceptionally rich and ought not to have been submitted as a sample of the print which could be obtained under working conditions'. It was agreed that the solution was to deepen the etch on the original die and make new plates; Mason listed the areas requiring urgent improvement as 'the outlines of the oval, the flowers, leaves and the baroque decoration'. Harrison was not available to re-engage the die (in hospital after an accident), but as no alteration seemed required to the head Clifford agreed to entrust the work to the engraver due to replace Harrison when he retired at the year's end.

Problems persisted with the 2s 6d; a sheet supplied on 22 July compared unfavourably with that approved on 12 July. Mason recorded that 'the shade of colour was too light and there was too much tone on the head and the supporters ... The appearance ... was much less bright than the approved die proof.' Further enquiries at Waterlows on 24 July revealed that 'the colour of the 2/6d had been the subject of repeated consultations between the firm's representatives during and after the run and that some of the 5/- sheets contained a flaw which had only been discovered after printing'. There were also several stamps on the sheet of 2s 6d supplied 'in which the background lacked uniformity because of broken lines'. After discussion Clifford proposed to re-etch a stronger background on the 2s 6d plate, and if this gave encouraging results, to prepare a new die from which fresh plates could be made. On 28 July Dell and Mason visited the printers again, and Clifford produced a pull from a plate that had been treated with acid to make a deeper background etch. This

showed promise but the colour now seemed to have too much black, and Clifford was asked to pull another proof from the plate in 'HD Brown minus white', as supplied originally - if satisfactory, the firm could use the acid treatment to produce a new die and thence a new plate. Meanwhile the 5s run seemed very close to the approved proof although similar treatment to the 2s 6d was not ruled out; the background of the 10s was being strengthened by acid and the lines of the leaves and oval deepened by the engraver.

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## STAMPS APPROVED AND ISSUED

On 3 August Dell wrote to Waterlows following discussions during a visit the previous day; a new sheet from the 5s stamp run taken for examination was approved for colour and Waterlows authorised to proceed printing and perforating. The new pull of the 2s 6d was satisfactory in the original colour but a slight deepening of the background was still needed and there seemed a certain weakness of impression just below the parting of the King's hair and also under the jaw. Clifford, however, argued that the stamp should be accepted as it stood, at least in the short term, as there was a possibility that existing supplies of the George V 2s 6d would run out before these changes could be implemented, particularly in Harrison's continuing absence; it was estimated at the end of July that stocks of 2s 6d would be exhausted by the last week of September and of the 10s by spring 1940, while the same estimate put stocks of the 5s on the verge of exhaustion within a month. Clifford's point was taken and the new 2s 6d finally confirmed as approved for colour on 18 August, with Waterlows requested to remedy various minor imperfections 'and any others that may be discovered' before proceeding to printing.

It was now necessary to issue the new 5s without awaiting the two other values, as stocks of the George V stamp were virtually depleted; this was done on 21 August without further incident during production. The next task was to issue the 2s 6d, which took place on 4 September, again without any further difficulties. Meanwhile work on re-etching the die and preparing a new plate for the 10s was completed and proof sheets submitted on 29 August; these were approved for colour the following day. Between 31 March and 29 August, various proofs were destroyed.

As demand for the 10s denomination was not high, and hence exhaustion of the George V stocks a remoter prospect, events moved slowly compared to the two other values. By 14 October ample supplies of the new 10s were to hand, and there now seemed a possibility that George V stocks of the value might be run down as early as November; the Stamp Section recommended issue of the new stamps on 30 October and this was agreed. The 2s 6d and 5s had both gone on sale at all provincial Head Offices and London District and Branch Offices; for the 10s, however, initial supplies were sent only to the busier provincial

offices - in London, the District Offices and some of the more important Branch Offices. The George V stamps were not withdrawn but continued on sale until stocks were exhausted.

Following the issue of the new high values, W T Wiggins-Davies wrote to the PMG requesting the return of his unsolicited designs, submitted in April 1937. This was done in February 1940; however, the BPMA retains a presentation card from Wiggins-Davies bearing all four of his designs in different colours (2s 6d, green; 5s, red; 10s, blue; 20s, brown). This is inscribed 'submitted to His Majesty's Postmaster-General May 1st 1937', although actually sent on 30 April that year; it is also somewhat cryptically annotated, in manuscript, 'A Memento of the Lakes with WTW-D's best wishes 20/9/38'.

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### WARTIME COLOUR CHANGES

In December 1940 the Controller of Dyestuffs, Sir Robert Waddington, criticised the GPO for its heavy use of dyes - the term 'extravagant' was used in the ensuing correspondence. At about the same time, the practice of 'cleaning' cancellations from stamps for fraudulent re-use was causing the GPO Investigation Branch growing concern. As a result PSD looked into the question of stamps with lighter backgrounds on which cancellations would be more legible and harder to remove. This led to the issue between July 1941 and September 1942 of the six smallest denomination low values in paler versions of the existing colours; in November 1941 the DPS suggested that a similar course should be contemplated with the high values. While consultation took place with the Government chemists on the security aspects of lighter dyes, Waterlows reported on 7 January 1942 that the stocks of HD Brown ink were nearing exhaustion: this was based on imported materials which could not be replaced, and it was impossible to obtain a matching domestic equivalent.

On investigating the cause of the shortage it transpired that normal usage of 2s 6d stamps (mainly on telegrams, overseas parcels and air mail packets) had increased to an 'astonishing' degree by Dominion troops sending cables home to friends and relations, and also public response to BBC radio's puzzle competitions in support of the Red Cross; in 1941 sales of the 2s 6d were up over 1940 by some 50 per cent, and 1942 sales would increase by a similar proportion over 1941. Meanwhile Stores rejected Waterlow's suggested alternative, Brown BB235; tests in September 1940 had shown that it 'was not sufficiently sensitive to treatment for the removal of cancellation ink'. Its own suggestions were Green FD1 or Green FK1, both having been tested for high value use in April 1939. Waterlows replied on 14 January that ingredients for these were also in very short supply, and proposed Green FD, Green FC or Brown HC (a lighter shade than HD). Stores stipulated that it wished to see proofs of 'any lighter green [than FC] of which supplies are available', and on 20 January Waterlows sent twelve die proofs each in Green FC, Green FB and Brown HC. It was noted on 27 January that neither green showed cancellation marks any better than the current

brown, and twelve more proofs in a still lighter green, G384, were supplied on 30 January. On 5 February the brown was ruled out by both Stores and PSD as too similar in shade to the 5s, while G384 was preferred for both appearance and ease of cancellation; its adoption was agreed by the Director General on 11 February. A plate proof of the 2s 6d in light green G384 (later described as 'yellow-green') was approved on 16 February and initial supplies in the new colour issued on 9 March. A new master die was produced for the green 2s 6d. The haste with production of stamps in the new colour was because existing stocks were expected to run out in mid-March 1942; in view of this the claim by H L Wallace, in 'Stamp Collecting' for 12 September 1952, may be noted, that he had seen both brown and green 2s 6d for sale in the autumn of 1945, in the head post office of Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

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## NEW COLOURS ISSUED

The Government chemists' report was submitted on 9 February; this concluded: 'The very dark 10/- stamp is probably the stamp from which cancellation marks can most easily be removed. It is also the stamp on which cancellation marks are least conspicuous.' In a memorandum to PSD on 13 February, confirming the chemists' findings from Stores' own experience, D P Dell explained that difficulties with cancelling the George VI high values were 'on account of the heavy weight of deep coloured pigment in the backgrounds of the designs ... The deep backgrounds of the present series were specially designed to enhance, by contrast, the beauty of the engraving of the head and decorative work ... The 10/- stamp, however, might be rendered more susceptible to cancellation, and thus more secure against cleaning, if the colour were lightened, and, if the Postal Services Department agree, essays in a lighter shade of blue will be obtained.' This proposal was swiftly agreed at various levels up to the DG, who accepted an additional suggestion that lighter essays of the 5s should also be obtained.

On 26 February Waterlows was asked to supply proofs of the 10s in the Blue EJ1 shade as used in colour trials in May 1939, plus a still lighter shade, if possible; proofs of the 5s were also required in a shade only slightly lighter than Red CC. It transpired that Blue EJ1 was yet another shade 'now not available'; however, on 3 March the printers supplied twelve proofs each of the 2s 6d in Blue EA and the slightly darker Blue B355, plus twelve of the 5s in Red R533. Clifford's covering letter warned, however: 'We should not have thought that the C.C. Red is a hue which should give any difficulty as regards cancellation ... If it is reduced much further the appearance and utility of the stamp will suffer.' Stores concurred, but nevertheless asked Waterlows on 18 March for another twelve proofs of the 5s 'in a much lighter shade than R533 red'; these were furnished on 30 March, the shade being described as R603A.

On 31 March Blue EA was proposed to the DG as 'more susceptible to cancellation [than Blue B355] and of a pleasing appearance' for use on the 10s; this recommendation was passed via the PMG to the King the same day, with the explanation that a lighter shade was required to combat fraud although the stamp would inevitably 'lose something of its present fine appearance'. The King's approval of the colour change was notified the following day; a 10s die proof in Blue EA was duly endorsed and returned to Waterlows, receipt acknowledged on 20 April. Opinion was generally against a change in colour of the 5s; Red R533 was found too slight a reduction in colour to justify its use, while Red R603A represented 'a reasonably well marked divergence' but was 'not very pleasing' in appearance, comparing unfavourably with the new colours chosen for the 2s 6d and 10s. Stores urged PSD in a memorandum of 3 April 'that the present 5/- stamp is sufficiently susceptible to cancellation and that no appreciable advantage would be gained by a reduction in the depth of colour'. The DG insisted that fresh tests should be carried out by the Government chemists - these were carried out and resulted in Stores reiterating its conclusion at the end of May that 'the advantage to be gained by the adoption of the colour R603A is not such as to outweigh the sacrifice of excellence in the workmanship of the present stamp which would be involved'. The Investigation Branch alone held out for the adoption of R603A on the grounds of its greater sensitivity to attempted 'cleaning', but conceded on 25 June that it had 'hitherto had no reason to suppose that the Revenue has been defrauded to any serious extent by the re-use of washed high value stamps'. The DG finally overruled a colour change to the 5s in July. On 21 July a Stores memorandum to PSD confirmed that bulk supplies of 10s stamps in Blue EA, or 'ultramarine' as it was usually called, were now in production and would be placed on sale when stocks of the present colour were run down in October or November: the stamps were issued in the new colour on 30 November 1942. As with the 2s 6d, a new master die was created for the colour change.

Although the colour changes to both low value and high value stamps were explained by the need to improve cancellation standards, it is clear that the extent of dye shortages made this a virtue out of necessity. The supply of dyes from Germany (a primary producer) had been cut off by war since 1939; the same state of affairs in the First World War led to 'startling variations' from the normal colour standards between 1915 and 1919 as the GPO fell back on supplies from British sources. A press release announcing the first changes in 1941 had explained that, as India and the Far East had imported dyes mainly from Germany before the war, it was important to divert as much British dyestuff as possible 'to capture the market while the chance exists' - this is an interesting explanation, although neither the only nor the most convincing one.

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## ISSUE OF £1 STAMP

On 11 April 1945 T Shanks of PSD asked Stores whether there was need for a £1 stamp and what problems this might cause. Dell replied on 19 April that demand for the high values since the beginning of 1940 did not indicate any stronger case for a £1 value than hitherto. He recommended a modification of the 10s design in a distinctive colour as less troublesome and time-consuming than securing a new design and having it engraved. Nothing happened until April 1948 and the issue of a special £1 stamp to commemorate the Royal Silver Wedding, which met with enough success to suggest that a £1 definitive might once more be justified. On 25 May J E Yates, the DPS, proposed to the DDG, R A Little, that, prior to the issue of a newly designed definitive £1 stamp to mark the occasion of the Festival of Britain planned for 1951, a £1 stamp of the same design as the current 10s should be issued as soon as possible, as a 'stop-gap'. Sir Raymond Birchall (the former DDG, knighted in 1939 and now Director General) passed on this proposal to the PMG, Wilfred Paling, on 29 May. It was assumed that Waterlows would print the £1 stamp, although the high value printing contract had yet to be amended to cover values over 10s; the Royal Silver Wedding £1 had been printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons, but only through extreme shortness of time.

On 3 June the DPS met Sir John Wilson, former President of the Royal Philatelic Society London, and informed him of the proposal in strict confidence; Sir John was strongly in favour and urged that 'no more suitable colour' could be found than the brown used for the 2s 6d before March 1942. On 7 June Leigh-Clare of PSD spoke to the College of Arms, asking George Bellew to prepare '£1' value panel for his 10s design; Bellew was happy to leave this to Waterlows, and wished only to see the modified design before it was issued. The same day Yates recommended to Stores that the stamps be issued on 1 October, Waterlows having confirmed it was possible to produce 12,500 sheets by that date; Stores confirmed this with the firm on 11 October and it was subsequently established that the required number could be delivered by 31 August to achieve an earlier issue date, but only if dies for the stamp were approved by the end of June.

On 16 June Philip Waterlow visited Stores with two pulls of the 10s in brown, from one of which the two values had been carefully cut away and replaced with a hand-painted '£1' in Chinese white, matching the original style of figure; although Brown HD was no longer available as such, it had been possible to remix a matching shade from raw materials. Later the same day Leigh-Clare showed the two pulls to Bellew's secretary at the College of Arms who took responsibility for approving the altered value in his absence. Approval was also obtained from the PMG, DG (Sir Raymond Birchall) and DDG before the pulls were returned to Waterlows on 17 June; die proofs were supplied by the firm on 5 July and approved on 7 July. This meant the 31 August delivery deadline was no longer practicable; however, a meeting had already taken place between Stores and PSD on 6 July at which the feeling had

been that the issue date should be between mid-September, and 1 October as the DPS had originally proposed. Yates wanted to bring the issue date forward because of an earlier statement that the Royal Silver Wedding £1 would be withdrawn at the end of July, and 'it would be stupid to have a gap of a month or so with no £1 stamp after we have said that there is a demand for it'; by 10 July, however, he agreed with the DDG and Stores that the simplest solution was to keep the Royal Silver Wedding stamps on sale as long after the end of July as necessary, and the 1 October date was confirmed on 14 July.

First plate proofs were supplied on 13 August; these were badly smudged, and a second set was submitted on 16 August and formally approved on 23 August. The Royal Silver Wedding £1 stamps were withdrawn on 30 September and replaced by the new definitive as scheduled on 1 October 1948. A quick analysis conducted at the end of the first week's business suggested that London area sales accounted for something like half the national total, almost none for philatelic use; this was at odds with the figures for the rest of the country, where 'philatelic' appeared to outnumber 'ordinary' sales in a ratio of roughly five-to-one. The stamp's life was comparatively brief; a total of 906,160 were issued before the advent of a new £1 definitive in 1951. There is some evidence of 'a most marked disinclination [on the public's part] to use the current G.B. £1 brown', to quote a letter by Major N J Wilson in 'Stamp Collecting' for 1 April 1950; he described seeing seven air mail parcels posted to the Forces in Egypt at Christmas 1949 from main London offices, at rates between 31s (£1.55) and 58s (£2.90), of which none bore a £1 stamp. The bulk of the postage had been made up 'with masses of 1s. values', plus three 10s, one 5s and about ten 2s 6d, suggesting that a certain 'disinclination' extended to the rest of the high values also.

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## PAYMENTS AND REACTIONS

MacDonald Gill was paid 15 guineas (£15.75) for his unaccepted design on 10 December 1937. Edmund Dulac was paid 100 guineas (£105) in March 1938, 200 guineas (£210) in July 1938, 50 guineas (£52.50) in October 1938 and 50 guineas in April 1939; all these payments covered work on both the low and high value stamps. George Bellew was paid 130 guineas (£136.50) in July 1939, covering the five College of Arms designs for the high values and subsequent work on them, another design submitted for the 1940 Centenary, and his general advice on heraldic matters over the preceding period. Finally Waterlows was paid £350 - £175 for each of the two basic designs - in April 1940.

Bellew was delighted to receive letters from 'quite a number of philatelists' at the end of 1939 praising his 10s design - 'the stamp seems to have been very well received and I have heard nothing but praise. I cannot think that it is only politeness!' One letter, claiming to give the general opinion amongst collectors, said that the 10s was 'the most beautiful design that we have had' since the 1840 Penny Black and the choice of colour 'also a most

happy one' - Bellew asked Fanshawe of Stores to pass these remarks to Waterlow's engraver, J A C Harrison, 'whose share in the success is more than equal to mine'. Other reactions were more mixed: 'Gibbons Stamp Monthly' (GSM) for December 1939 found the appearance of the 10s stamp pleasing, but 'one wonders whether a mass of mid-Victorian fretwork is really the best setting for a portrait of this present reign'. The detail was 'very artistically employed', but 'we still feel that dignity in stamp design should be achieved by way of simplicity'. The article also suggested that Dulac had 'fallen between two stools in trying to make a stamp at one and the same time armorial and a portrait' in designing the 2s 6d and 5s. Later opinion swung away from Bellew's design and towards Dulac's; in the August 1953 GSM James Watson called the 2s 6d and 5s 'this superbly balanced and handsome design, possibly Dulac's best'. In his book 'British Postage Stamp Design' John Easton called Dulac's design 'magnificently simple ... the best stamp issued for Great Britain since 1840' (ironically echoing the counter-claim of Bellew's admirers a decade earlier) while tersely suggesting that the 10s put stamp design back to 1903. A general consensus emerged that Bellew's stamp was too cluttered with fussy detail - Easton, for example, scathingly described how 'POSTAGE, small and insignificant, crouches beneath a canopy of herbage'. James Watson, writing in the 'British Philatelic Bulletin' (BPB) in December 1973, criticised the 'rather complex and tangled floral frame' of the design, and suggested that in view of his background Bellew might have been happier working on an armorial theme such as Dulac's! In March 1994 James Mackay dismissed Bellew's 10s design in a BPB article as simply 'a more florid version of [Eric Gill's] low value concept'.

Generally, however, the Bellew stamp has been viewed more sympathetically in recent years - in his book 'Royal Mail Stamps', published in 1980, Stuart Rose, while finding Bellew's design 'rather over-elaborated' in comparison with Dulac's, thought that the 1939-48 range of high values as a whole 'have about them, particularly the 2s 6d and the 10s, an unmistakable air of quality and authority'. John Woolford, writing in 'Stamp Magazine' in July 1984, thought:

It is difficult to agree with all the rude remarks about the 1939 10/- and the 1948 £1. True, the design was not as good as that of the 2/6 and 5/-, and it is true also that the King's head is surrounded by a lot of vegetation. However, when I started collecting stamps as a small boy ... I remember that the 10/- made a greater impression on me than the two lower values. It has a great air of strength and firmness, which is missing from just about all stamps today.

Dulac's design has remained largely uncriticised, apart from GSM's 'two stools' observation in 1939. A 'Stamp Collecting' article in September 1952 analysed it from the heraldic viewpoint and noted a number of defects, perhaps missing the point that complete heraldic accuracy cannot be attained in monochrome. In a letter published by the BPB in February 1974 W A Aubrey Witham called the design 'exceptionally badly out of balance - the mass of

detailed interest falling well below centre line and giving the appearance of being bottom heavy’.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

GEORGE ROTHE BELLEW, KCB, KCVO, was born in Dublin on 13 December 1899 and educated at Wellington and Christ Church, Oxford. His entire professional career from 1922 onward was spent at the College of Arms. In 1926 he was appointed Somerset Herald; his chief work was in genealogy and heraldry, but he also produced stamp designs on behalf of the College for most special issues between the 1940 Stamp Centenary and the 1951 Festival of Britain as well as the 1939-48 high values. During war service with the RAFVR he was promoted to Squadron Leader and mentioned in despatches. As Garter Principal King of Arms from 1950, he was among the principal organisers of George VI's funeral in 1952 and the 1953 Coronation, his contribution to the latter being particularly acclaimed. Among other accomplishments he was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a judo Black Belt. He was knighted on his retirement in 1961 and died on 6 February 1993.

EDMUND DULAC was born in Toulouse, France, on 22 October 1882, making his career as an artist from 1904 onwards. He worked in Britain from 1907 and was naturalised in 1912. He was most active as a book illustrator but worked successfully in such other fields as caricature, poster art, interior decoration and theatrical design. His earliest 'stamp' designs were for Red Cross charity labels in the Great War, and his first public commission the King's Medal for Poetry inaugurated in 1935. The head of George VI that Dulac originally drew for the low values was subsequently used on all stamps of the reign at the King's insistence. His last designs for Elizabeth II definitives were used until decimalisation, while his 1s 3d Coronation stamp remains an acclaimed special issues. His pastimes included flamenco dancing and making and playing bamboo nose flutes; he died on 25 May 1953, before his last stamps were issued.

J A C HARRISON first worked on stamps as a freelance contracted to the Royal Mint, in which capacity he engraved the typographic dies for the George V accession stamps of 1911. For the greater part of his career he was contracted to Waterlows, with whom he became known as a master of intaglio engraving for his work on the 'Seahorses' high stamps of 1913 and the Wembley Exhibition commemoratives of 1924-25. For the PUC issue of 1929 he engraved the 1d stamp for Waterlows and the £1 stamp for Bradbury Wilkinson; although Bradbury Wilkinson then held the high values contract this only covered denominations up to 10s, but the GPO extended it to cover the special £1 on condition that Harrison undertake the engraving. To undertake the work Harrison was released by Waterlows to Bradbury Wilkinson. In addition to the 1939 high values, which some thought his finest achievement, he also worked on a very wide range of foreign and colonial issues.

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