

STAMP DEFINITIVES

THE FIRST ISLE OF MAN REGIONAL STAMPS

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The proposal to have Regional stamps had been approved by the Queen on 7 July 1956 and the Postmaster General (PMG), Dr Charles Hill, was keen to start the process. On 25 July 1956 the Deputy Director General, S D Sargent, wrote to H A Ashdowne, the North Western Regional Director, explaining that the PMG had said in reply to Garner-Evans MP on 18 July that advice on the design of the new stamps would be obtained from 'Committees representative of cultural and artistic interests in the countries and islands concerned'. The first step, therefore, was to decide on the composition of the Committees and Ashdowne was asked for his views.

Having discussed the matter with F G Price, the Head Postmaster of Douglas, Isle of Man, Ashdowne suggested that the following be considered:

B R S Megaw (Director and Librarian of the Manx Museum)

Sir Joseph Qualtrough (President of the Manx Language Society, and Speaker of the House of Keys)

William Hoggatt RI (President of the Society for the Preservation of the Manx Countryside)

David Craine MA (associated with the Manx Branch of the Celtic Congress and thought by Ashdowne to be a philatelist).

Ashdowne also thought the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Ambrose Dundas, should be consulted.

Meanwhile the PMG and the Assistant Postmaster General, C J M Alport, had a discussion regarding the Advisory Committees. It was decided that the advisory panel that assisted the PMG to select designs for United Kingdom stamps should only be required to assist in the selection of the new stamps for the Isle of Man if it proved impractical to form a Committee for this. It was also agreed that the new Committees should be asked to submit two or three designs from which the PMG would make the final choice. It was thought this

would help to preserve 'clearly the constitutional position that the final decision must rest with the Postmaster General'.

The PMG had made the proposal for regional stamps public in the House of Commons on 18 July 1956. The news of a stamp for the Isle of Man had been eagerly received by the Manx press, and the Isle of Man 'Weekly Times' immediately arranged a 'design a Manx stamp' competition. Ashdowne wrote to Sargent enclosing cuttings from the paper dated 17 and 24 August, the latter showing the winning entries. Sargent's response on seeing the designs was that they 'rather horrified him'.

On 17 September Sir Austin Strutt of the Home Office wrote to Sargent saying that the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man had proposed the membership of the Committee ' be as follows:

The Speaker of the House of Keys, Sir Joseph Qualtrough CBE, JP, recommended as Chairman by the Lieutenant Governor.

David Craine MA, an expert on Manx history and folklore.

Wilfred Quayle FRICS, FIAA, an art representative on the Manx Museum and National Trust.

His Honour Deemster Arthur Cain MA, second Deemster of the Legislative Council of the Isle of Man.

H T Walker FSA, Chairman of the Mannin Art Group.

G V Kneale, Chairman of the Isle of Man Art Society.

B R S Megaw FSA, FMA, Director and Librarian of the Manx Museum, recommended by the Lieutenant Governor as Secretary.

The Director of Postal Services (DPS), R H Locke, informed Ashdowne of the Lieutenant Governor's recommendations. Three of the four names put forward by Ashdowne had been included, the exception being William Hoggatt. The Governor had considered Hoggatt but felt the Committee was sufficiently large and well represented without Hoggatt's inclusion.

The APMG approved the proposed membership, and sent invitations on 4 November. The invitations were all accepted. Locke advised Ashdowne on 5 December and said that he should now call the first meeting. The meetings would be held on the Isle of Man, unless the members had other wishes. Locke suggested it would be best for Ashdowne to attend the first meeting, but 'in view of the time involved in travel to and from the island', the Post Office should be represented at the subsequent meetings by the Head Postmaster of Douglas, Isle of Man.

Locke enclosed documents to be given to members. These included a shade card, a small photograph of the Queen, an uncanceled set of low value stamps and a draft of a press statement.

Ashdowne wrote in reply on 6 December, thanking Locke but suggesting that the reference in the press statement to the 4d and 1s 3d stamps for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should be removed as there had already been some local comment about confining the issue in the island to just the one denomination of 2½d. He made a second point, admitting he did not feel so strongly about this, that it was undesirable to bring attention to the fact that the Committees for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland had already been formed. These modifications were agreed by Locke and a revised version was produced.

On 7 December F J Langfield of the Postal Services Department (PSD) wrote to Ashdowne explaining that an approach had been made by R Buckle and L Thornton, offering their services as artists for the Regional stamps. It had been decided that they should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

A Buckle explained that his previous work included an illuminated address for the Queen on her Coronation which she accepted. The Post Office had no specimen of his work and the Council of Industrial Design had no knowledge of him.

L Thornton had submitted six designs for the permanent series of low value Queen Elizabeth II stamps. One of these had been placed on the short list but was rejected at the final selection. He had also submitted designs for the Coronation issue but these had been rejected at the initial selection.

In addition the name of A Kitson Tylor was put forward, of whom the Post Office knew nothing.

The PMG announced on 11 December that he had now appointed the Committee to advise him on the designs of the new 2½d stamp for the Isle of Man. Its main function was to be: to suggest symbols for inclusion in the borders of the new stamp.

(The basic design of the stamp was to remain unchanged with Her Majesty's head as the dominant feature);

to suggest the names of artists who might be invited to submit designs;

to advise the Postmaster General on the selection of the design for the new stamp.

The function differed from that of the existing Advisory Panel whose role was restricted to advising the PMG about the selection of the designs.

COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING

The first meeting was held on 19 December at the House of Keys. Deemster Cain had, however, died before the Committee first met.

The Chairman's proposal that B R S Megaw act as Honorary Secretary was approved. Ashdowne was invited by the Chairman to offer any information that might help the Committee. He said that he and Price had no wish to interfere but would be glad to help if asked. The Committee was therefore entirely free to act within the terms outlined by the Postmaster General. He emphasised that the deliberations were confidential.

He advised the Committee that the PMG had decided that the size, colour and method of production of the 2½d stamp was to remain unchanged. The approved head of the Queen was to remain the dominant feature. The letters 'ER' were not essential, but to meet the wishes of the Universal Postal Union and the Inland Revenue, it was strongly urged that 'Postage' and 'Revenue' be included. The value was to be reasonably prominent in Arabic figures.

Ashdowne could give no guarantee when the stamps would be issued but thought that if artists were invited in January then July might be a possibility. This was, however, a personal estimate.

The Committee discussed details that should be included on the stamp. Three points were agreed:

The Three Legs on a Shield (the Arms of the Kingdom of Man), as displayed on the Sword of State and the Maughold Cross.

The 'Ring-Chain' pattern, characteristic of the Manx Runic Crosses, as surround for the head whether in an oval or rectangular frame.

'Postage', 'Revenue', and the value in Arabic figures.

Discussion followed as to which local artists had the necessary technique and experience. It was agreed that Mrs A Humphreys, Miss Margaret Lockwood and John H Nicholson be invited to submit designs.

Subsequent to this meeting, Ashdowne provided the Chairman with the following further information that was passed on to the Committee by means of a memorandum.

The artists were required initially to submit their designs in a rough stage, four times the length and four times the breadth of the final stamp.

It was not possible at this stage to say when the Manx stamp would appear, and the PMG may well decide to make all the new stamps available to the public at the same time.

The artists were free to choose whether or not to substitute the oval surround for the Queen's head, but any other layout used would have to be consistent with the stated requirements.

It was essential that all artists were given the same advice and information. The artists were not to attend any meetings, formal or otherwise, with their designs as this may lead to influence or copying among the artists.

When submitting the designs to the PMG, the Committee was to indicate its first, second and third choice.

The recommendations of the Committee were sent to Ashdowne on 1 February 1957, who in turn wrote to R H Locke. Locke replied on 28 February that the APMG had approved the recommendations with some minor changes. It had been decided that the artists be instructed to omit the word 'Revenue' and that they might also omit the word 'Postage' if it allowed a better design. The change arose from the fact that it had not been realised that stamps were not valid in the Isle of Man for revenue purposes. The instructions were in preparation and would be forwarded once ready.

Locke said the stamp would be produced as quickly as possible but would not be ready in time for that year's 'Summer Season'. In fact, the Isle of Man Committee was the last to make its recommendations and it was unlikely if the stamp would be ready for sale before autumn. The actual date would be considered once there had been more progress.

Locke wrote again to Ashdowne on 13 March saying the Instructions to Artists were now complete and ready to despatch to the nominated artists. Locke sent the covering letters and instruction to Ashdowne to show the Chairman and the Head Postmaster who, if no points were raised, were to despatch them.

INSTRUCTIONS TO ARTISTS

The Instructions stated that it was proposed to issue a 2½d stamp for the Isle of Man, to be in the same colour as the existing stamp of that denomination with symbols in the border to indicate its connection with the island.

The artists were invited to submit rough sketch proportional wash drawings in sepia-grey. The photogravure process by which the stamps were to be printed produced a number of

graduated tones and the artists were advised to use materials that would permit the photographing of each tone in its true value. A card was enclosed showing the range of tones.

The symbols in the border were to be the sole features indicating the connection with the Isle of Man. The choice and treatment of these was therefore of 'paramount importance'. Any number of symbols could be used, shown separately or in combination, with the selection left to the artists. Although any subject which had particular significance to the Isle of Man and could be symbolised or stylised was admissible, the design had to include, in a shield, the Arms of the Kingdom of Man ('The Three Legs') and the interlaced pattern known as the 'Ring Chain', whether as an oval surround for the Queen's head or as a rectangular frame for the stamp. Photographs showing various examples of the symbols were enclosed.

The Queen's head could be moved on either a vertical or horizontal axis to allow more space, but this was not to have the effect of making the head less dominant. It was preferred that the value appear once and in clear Arabic numerals, although a design where it appeared twice would not be rejected solely on these grounds.

The artists could submit one or more drawings. The fee was to be 20 guineas for each drawing up to a maximum of 40 guineas per artist. Those artists subsequently invited to bring their drawings to completion would be allowed four weeks to do so, with a further fee of 20 guineas. The design to be used would be selected from these completed drawings and would attract an additional fee of 160 guineas, making a total of 200 guineas in all. The artists were to submit their designs to the Director of Postal Service not later than first post on 18 April 1957.

ARTWORK RECEIVED BY THE POST OFFICE

All three artists accepted the invitation and the following artwork was received by the DPS by the due date:

A Humphrey – designs 1 to 7

M E Lockwood – designs 8 to 10

J H Nicholson – designs 11 to 17.

Locke sent the 17 drawings to Ashdowne on 13 May together with eight sheets of the bromides for the use of the Committee. Locke pointed out that the trial designs of stamps were of considerable philatelic interest and therefore the drawings and bromides should be treated as confidential with no one outside of the Post Office, apart from the Committee members, being allowed to see them.

Locke also enclosed the following comments on the designs:

1. The words 'Isle of Man' on drawings 1 to 7 should not have been included.
 2. The Queen's head was not sufficiently dominant in drawings numbered 1 and 6, and too small in drawings numbered 10 and 13, although the minimum permitted size would have fitted the space.
 3. The word 'Postage' was not shown on drawings 5, 6, 12, 14 and 16.
 4. The pictorial treatment in drawing number 2 was not admissible and it was preferred that the ship in drawing number 10 be omitted.
 5. The value figure and the 'D' in drawing number 10 was not readily apparent.
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COMMITTEE MAKES SELECTION

Ashdowne showed the drawings and bromides to the Committee when it met on 27 May. Ashdowne drew attention to the points raised by Locke.

Ashdowne asked the Committee if the floral design incorporated in design numbers 3, 4 and 5 was sufficiently symbolic of the Isle of Man. During discussion it emerged that the flower was Cushag and would not be readily identifiable unless shown in yellow. Also known as ragwort, it was a weed that was not indigenous to the island. It was sometimes used heraldically but was not considered sufficiently important by the Committee to be included. It had not been included on the list of symbols for the artists and should not have been used.

The Committee was asked a similar question regarding the ship in design number 10. Sir Joseph explained that the Norse ship was a Manx emblem but when reduced to stamp size was not recognisable. He added that the interlaced pattern paid 'greater and more appropriate tribute to the Norse heritage'. The Committee agreed that the ship should be omitted and that this was possible without fundamentally changing the design.

The Committee selected the three most suitable preliminary drawings for bringing to completion. Drawings 1 to 8 were eliminated for various reasons including an inaccurate treatment of the symbolic designs, designs being generally unacceptable or including features not acceptable to either the Post Office or the Committee. It was also said the quality of the drawings 1 to 7 indicated that the artist would not be able to produce a final drawing of a suitable standard.

No. 9 had not been accepted because the interlaced pattern was not correct. The Queen's head was too far off centre, reducing its dominance, but could not be moved without

reducing the width of the interlaced pattern, which would have a detrimental effect on the design.

No. 11 was rejected because the background was 'too much like wallpaper' and that the interlaced pattern was likely to be lost when printed. No. 12 was rejected for similar reasons. Designs 13 and 15 were found unacceptable owing to their interlace pattern. The pattern on no. 13 was too narrow and the pattern used on no. 15 was wrong. Design 17 was rejected because the Queen's head was too far off centre and to remedy this would spoil the overall design and make the Queen's head too small.

The three designs the Committee selected were, in order of preference, 16, 14 and 10. The selection of these was subject to modifications. The interlace pattern on design 16 was to be brought nearer the edge of the stamp and the word 'Postage' was to be inserted just above the Crown on the Queen's head or, alternatively, on a separate attempt inserted vertically on the right hand side of the Queen's head but within the frame formed by the interlace pattern.

On design 14 the interlace pattern was to be made wider by taking it nearer the edges of the stamp. The '2½d' was to be moved to the right hand bottom corner and the shield with the three Legs of Man moved to the left hand bottom corner. The value was to be placed in a shield to balance the Three Legs emblem. The word 'Postage' was to be added along the top and replace that section of the interlace pattern. The finishing of the interlace pattern at the left and right top should be made to conform to the general design of the interlace.

On design 10 the ship was to be removed and the interlace pattern taken nearer to the edge of the stamp. The 'D' was to be enlarged.

The Committee unanimously agreed that Lockwood should be invited to bring design 10 to completion and Nicholson likewise to designs 14 and 16.

COMPLAINTS OF DELAY

The editorial of the Isle of Man 'Weekly Times', on 14 June 1957, asked: 'What has become of the Manx postage stamps?' Nothing had been heard since the Committee had been appointed and it was suggested that the reason be explained. F G Price discussed this with B R S Megaw, Secretary of the Committee. They both felt that reporters would seek further information and that it would be embarrassing if they were not told anything. A Wolstencroft, who had replaced Locke as DPS in 1957, was told of this by Ashdowne on 17 June. The DPS subsequently advised Ashdowne of what could be said and on 21 June both the Isle of Man 'Examiner' and 'Ramsey Courier' featured short articles updating the

situation. It was said that there was more in the production of a new stamp design than was generally appreciated and work was proceeding satisfactorily. A report on the same lines appeared in the Isle of Man 'Daily Times' on 24 June.

Miss E A Knight of PSD circulated a memorandum on 25 June outlining recent developments. The Home Office had rung the previous day to say that the Attorney General of the Isle of Man wished to see a representative of the Post Office. The Isle of Man Government was under the impression that the Post Office, in particular the North West Region, was delaying progress on the stamp issue. Miss Knight had discussed this with Ashdowne, who in turn discussed it with Megan, Secretary of the Committee. It appeared that there were two factors giving rise to the perceived problems. The first was that Megan was leaving for Edinburgh University at the end of August, and another member of the Committee, H T Walker, had died. Megan was an active member and Walker, an artist, was considered very useful. These two events concerned the Chairman who had mentioned his anxiety to the Governor of the island. It was suggested that the intention of the Attorney General was that the choice of design be cleared by the middle of August before Megan left. The second contributing factor was thought to emanate from another member of the Committee, G V Kneale, who was an artist but had not been asked to submit designs. At the meeting on 27 May he produced some of his own designs, which had not been considered by the Committee for selection. This might have provoked bad feelings. Kneale was also an editor of a Manx newspaper (Miss Knight believed this to be the Isle of Man 'Weekly Times') and he was thought to be behind the publicity about the delays.

Ashdowne thought that the problem more likely the first concern and if the finished drawings could be back with the Committee before Megan left then the matter could be resolved. Miss Knight explained this was unlikely owing to extreme pressure of work in the Postal Services Department, and suggested that if it was only Megaw's departure that was at issue then there was no reason why he could not remain a member and travel from Edinburgh. Travel subsistence payments and secretarial assistance would be provided.

The Attorney General, Mr Moore, saw H N Pickering of PSD and Miss Knight on 27 June. Moore, as a representative of the Governor of the Isle of Man, was anxious to know how the stamp was progressing. Pickering said that progress was being made on the Isle of Man stamp at the same rate as the other Regional stamps, although the Manx Committee had got off to a slow start. Moore had not been aware of the press statement issued in response to some criticism, but once shown cuttings from recent Manx newspapers seem quite satisfied.

Moore mentioned Walker's death, Megaw's impending departure for Edinburgh and Deemster Cain's death just before the Committee started its work. He asked whether the Post Office felt it necessary to appoint a further member. Pickering said that if the

Governor was to suggest an additional member there would be no objection but the main work of the Committee was practically completed.

COMMITTEE'S SELECTION APPROVED

Sargent wrote to the APMG on 16 August saying the Committee had made its choice of designs, adding if the APMG agreed he would inform the Chairman of the Committee that it was proposed to ask the artists to modify and complete their drawings. It was pointed out that it would now be necessary for the artists to alter the denominations from 2½d to 3d as it had been agreed that the postage rates would increase on 1 October that year.

Sargent enclosed a summary of the comments on the designs made by the Committee, and those made subsequently by the printers. The printers had advised it would be preferable for the word 'Postage' to be down the side of the design rather than above the Queen's head because of the small amount of space available above the tiara. Sargent proposed that the artist provide detachable tabs showing the word 'Postage' in both positions. Sargent had shown the drawings informally to Sir Francis Meynell, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on United Kingdom stamps. His comments, not reported to the APMG, were not complimentary. Sir Francis thought that design 16 was flawed by 'awkward interruptions of the border', design 14 'looked too much like a photograph frame' and design 10, although best of the three, was not very impressive. Despite this he thought all three were worthy of bringing to completion and was inclined to favour design 10, the Committee's third choice, in preference to 16 which the Committee had placed as first choice. Sargent suggested, however, that the question of which was the best of the three be left until nearer the time of submission to the Queen.

The APMG approved the three designs and added that he also liked design 9, as 'an interesting departure from the regular stamp format'.

On 22 August Ashdowne wrote to Miss Knight saying that both Sir Joseph and Megaw saw no objection to bringing design 9 to completion. Ashdowne had sought the opinions of Sir Joseph and Megaw regarding the diminishing size of the Committee. Megaw said he could not continue to serve. He did not think a successor could come from the remaining members and therefore an additional member should be appointed. Sir Joseph had initially felt that there was no need as the work was nearly finished. His mind was changed when Ashdowne explained that the examination of the completed drawings was an important stage of the selection process that required broad representation. Ashdowne had pointed out that if one member were absent through sickness the meeting would consist of three out of the original seven. This, he said, could not be regarded as a quorum. Sir Joseph felt a new member should be appointed, preferably one who could be the Secretary, but said

representation of the Committee was a matter for the Governor. Ashdowne sought, informally, the views of the Government Secretary. This resulted in agreement that it would be desirable to appoint the new Curator of the Manx Museum.

Miss Knight replied on 27 August that the PMG had approved the Committee's recommendation that designs 16, 14 and 10 be brought to completion and that the artists be asked to do this. At the next stage the Committee would be asked to select two designs only and, as there were no strong feelings for design 9, Miss Knight suggested the Committee might wish to reject it now rather than later. It was subsequently agreed by the Committee and the Post Office not to bring design 9 to completion.

On 30 August Miss Knight wrote separately to the three artists. A Humphreys was told that it had been decided that on this occasion none of her seven designs would be brought to completion. Payment of 40 guineas was made for the drawings. As with all pieces of artwork submitted these were retained by the Post Office in accordance with the 'Instructions to Artists'.

J H Nicholson was told that two of his drawings (16 and 14) were to be brought to completion. He was informed of the modifications that were to be included, and a payment of 40 guineas was made for the rough drawings submitted. M E Lockwood was asked to bring her preliminary drawing 10 to completion incorporating modifications, and a payment of 40 guineas was made. Both artists were given until 30 September to complete their work.

Sir Austin Strutt of the Home Office wrote to Sargent on 4 September saying that the Lieutenant Governor had held discussions with Sir Joseph and had decided not to recommend the PMG to appoint replacements for the two deceased members. He did recommend, however, that Megaw's successor at the Manx Museum, A M Cubbon, should be appointed to the Committee in Megaw's place. This proposal was agreed by the APMG.

On 1 October S Robson of Supplies forwarded the three modified drawings to the printers and requested any technical comments. Four stamp size bromides of each drawing were also requested: Nicholson's design 14 'with the tab POSTAGE included horizontally between the tiara and top border', and 16 'with the tab POSTAGE included vertically between the Queen's Head and the right hand border'; Lockwood's design 10 as it stood. Harrison's replied on 7 October enclosing the bromides and regretting that, 'with regards to their suitability for reproduction', all three designs would require redrawing to a finished standard. Designs 16 and 14 required tidying up, particularly the lettering, but 10 needed to be completely and accurately redrawn.

BROMIDES SEEN BY COMMITTEE

On 30 November Miss Knight wrote to Ashdowne enclosing the three designs together with eight sheets of bromides. The Committee was to select two recommended to be submitted to the Queen for final choice. Subject to the PMG's approval, and satisfactory redrawing as requested by the printers, colour essays of both designs would be prepared. The colour essays would be seen by the Committee before being submitted to the Queen, but it was hoped there would not at that stage be a call for further modifications. In order to preserve the principle of the PMG's responsibility for the designs and to minimise any possible difficulties about overriding recommendations that the Committee might make, it was agreed he should attend the meetings in each region where final selection was to be made. It was, however, subsequently agreed that he should only attend the Scottish, Northern Ireland and Welsh meetings because selection of the final designs for three denominations was considered more complicated than that for the other three regions, including the Isle of Man, where only one denomination was being issued.

The Isle of Man Committee held its third meeting on 4 December when A M Cubbon, Curator of the Manx Museum, was welcomed and elected to succeed Megaw as Honorary Secretary. Ashdowne wrote to Miss Knight on the following day with extracts of the minutes of the meeting. At the same time he returned the drawings and bromides.

The Committee rejected design 10 because the detailed treatment of the design would not be clear once reduced to stamp size, especially the Three Legs. It chose design 16 in preference to 14, the second choice, but both of these required further modification. The Committee described these modifications in detail in an effort to negate the need for further work once the essays were produced. The modifications were extensive, and in the case of design 16 involved some alteration in the design. The Committee therefore wished to see the modified designs before they were passed to the printers.

The artist had supplied two versions of design 16 (A and B) which were identical except for the positioning of the word 'Postage'. Despite not being pleased with the word in either version, the Committee still felt strongly in favour of this design. 'Postage' had not initially been insisted upon by the Post Office, but had now become necessary to include it for the sake of consistency, as it had been included on the other Regional stamps.

The Committee agreed that the design should be redrawn taking into account recommended modifications, including:

- (a) The edge of the stamp should be lightened slightly in tone.
- (b) The interlacing across the bottom of the stamp was to be replaced with the word 'Postage' in 'letters of the deepest tone on a graduated background, passing from the light tone surrounding the Queen's head to the half tone of the stamp'. The word 'Postage' was

to extend from the right hand side of the left hand panel of interlacing to the '3D' in the bottom right hand corner of the stamp.

(c) The graduated toning was to be continued to eliminate the white circle in the bottom right hand corner of the stamp. '3D' was to appear in letters of the darkest tone on this graduated background.

The Committee also went into detail on how the artist had incorrectly drawn the interlaced pattern. Two sketches were produced at the meeting to show the artists how the pattern should be drawn at the base and at the junction of the two patterns.

Regarding design 14, as with 16 the edge of the stamp was to be lightened slightly in tone. The graduated toned background was to be continued from around the Queen's head to grade to the half tone top edge of the stamp, forming the background to the word 'Postage'. Modifications, similar to that for 16, were to be made to the interlaced pattern.

On 10 December Miss Knight wrote to Ashdowne to state that she had written to the artist with the recommendations of the Committee with the advice that he should contact F G Price, the Head Postmaster, if he was any way unsure. There had, however, been doubts about making the overall effect of the stamp too light, and the instructions to the artists had been modified in this respect. Knight stressed it was important that, however distinctive the design might be, it should still be instantly recognisable as a stamp of the 3d denomination. For this reason there had also been doubts about the elimination of the white circle on design 16. It was feared that the modification suggested by the Committee might have the effect of making the denomination not sufficiently conspicuous, but there was no way of knowing until the new design was seen.

Miss Knight wrote to H A Berry, the Manager of Harrison and Sons, on 1 January 1958 enclosing two modified drawings recently received from J H Nicholson. She requested three stamp-sized bromides of each, using the 'Postage 3d' transparency with design 16 (16 was originally referred to by Harrisons as 206 and 14 as No. 205). Berry replied the next day that every effort would be made to deliver the bromides the following week. He also confirmed that the designs were quite suitable for reproduction, but felt possibly that the finish left something to be desired. What was required ideally was the best quality of drawing of the background and border design, leaving out the Queen's head and the lettering, which Harrisons could prepare and insert; if the artist had any problems in doing this, the company would provide the necessary redrawing in his style. He also asked that black and white lettering should be supplied on separate transparent overlays.

Knight wrote to Ashdowne on 8 January enclosing the two bromides of the modified designs. While the artist had supplied two modified versions of design 16, identical apart from the shade used (referred to as A and B), to save time only a bromide of the darker

version, 16A, had been prepared. This conformed more closely to the general range of tone used already on the 3d stamp. Although the artist had been asked to draw 'POSTAGE' in the deep tone on a graduated background, he had in fact drawn the word in white but Knight was sure that no other tone would show up satisfactorily. She suggested it had been redrawn as the Committee had wished, with the exception of the right hand end of the bottom panel of interlacing which did not link properly and the top right hand corner, which had still not been adequately redrawn. General tidying-up also needed to be carried out, which could be undertaken by the printer in collaboration with the artist.

The Committee met on 13 January when it examined the modified drawings and bromides. The Committee preferred 16B, the lighter toned version of the two. After discussion it was agreed that the artist should modify the top right hand corner of the design. A M Cubbon sketched a revised design of the interlacing to assist the artist. It was also agreed that the left hand panel of interlacing should be modified to fit more closely around the shape of the bottom of the shield. Again a sketch was prepared to assist the artist.

The Committee then examined design 14. It was agreed that the balance and effect would be improved if the size of the Queen's head were reduced slightly to make it halfway between that on design 14 and 16 as submitted. It was also agreed that other modifications needed to be carried out:

The tones in the bottom corners of the stamp to be lightened slightly to show the shape of the two shields more clearly.

The right hand end of the bottom panel of interlacing was to be the same as the bottom of the two side panels.

The word 'Postage' was to be tidied-up and modified to match the style and type used on design 16, but remain black lettering on the light toned background.

It was agreed that the tidying-up should be left to the artist and the printer. The Committee was unanimous that design 16B, modified as suggested, was strongly preferred over 14.

Miss Knight wrote to Nicholson on 20 January regretting that further revision to detail was required. She was sure he would agree, however, that it was essential 'to get the symbolism right on a stamp which, if it is accepted, will probably be on sale for many years'. With the request for further redrawing Nicholson was paid 20 guineas, in addition to the 40 guineas, to be paid as soon as the revised artwork was received, to which he was already entitled for having his design selected for use. That same day Knight wrote to Ashdowne confirming she had sent the designs back to the artist with further instructions. She noted that the Committee preferred the lighter version of design 16 and said it should be possible to make the colour essay of this look sufficiently like the present 3d stamp for there to be no risk of confusion.

On 30 January Sargent wrote to the PMG saying that the Committee had made its selection, subject to minor modifications, of first choice and a reserve. The APMG had seen and approved these proposals and if the PMG approved the printer would now be asked to prepare colour essays of the two designs. The PMG gave his approval on 2 February.

PRINTERS INSTRUCTED TO PRODUCE ESSAYS

Miss E A Knight sent design 14 to the printers on 11 February and requested six essays in violet, incorporating the following modifications:

- (i) Add a photograph of the Queen's head on which the dimensions from the point of the chin to the topmost point of the tiara is 1.375 inches.
- (ii) The links on the design at two points I have marked with an 'x' are not quite true. I have sketched the modification which is required ... We have sent the design back to the artist so many times that it would be pointless to ask him to make this further modification.
- (iii) Prepare lettering in black of the word 'Postage' to go along the top of the design.

She added that design 16 was currently back in Nicholson's hands 'as he has still not done the inter-lacing correctly':

In the meantime would you please repair the enclosed transparent over-layer for this design [16] showing 'Postage 3d' and keep it in readiness ... The word 'Postage' which is to be included on design 14 should be in the same style as this transparent over-layer but spread out slightly to fit the space.

F G Price wrote to Miss Knight on 17 February enclosing the artist's latest efforts on design 16, saying he had met Nicholson the previous Saturday with Sir Joseph and A M Cubbon. Price said he had previously met the artist when he had tactfully pointed out that there was a slight deterioration in his work, to which the artist had 'cheerfully admitted ... and said he had trouble with his eyes, [but] he had now obtained spectacles'. Price thought his work now showed a 'grand improvement' and had satisfied Sir Joseph and Cubbon. The artist had made two drawings of the design, marked 1 and 2. Cubbon wished no. 1 to be considered as the final version, the only difference in the two being that the shield on no. 1 was raised above the chain. Miss Knight replied on 19 February that she agreed it was a great improvement and was sending version 1 to the printer at once. There were still several minor faults, which the printer was asked to touch up the drawing to rectify. These blemishes included misshapen links of the chain, the shield was also askew and there was insufficient clearance between the edge of the shield and the top right hand foot. The printer was also asked to 'insert a Queen's head of the size and type used in the production of bromide No. 28/C; overlay the transparency Postage 3d ... and produce, as early as possible, 6 essays in violet'.

Nicholson was paid 40 guineas on 3 March for the finished drawings of design 16.

On 30 April essays of designs 14 and 16 were sent to PSD; one of each was retained by Supplies. Miss Knight wrote to Ashdowne on 2 May enclosing two copies of each for the Committee's reference.

The only comment made was that 'in design No. 16, the graduation in tone from the base of the stamp towards the centre ought to be a little less abrupt'.

Ashdowne was told that if the Committee agreed with this, and the design was chosen for use, then the defect could be remedied without difficulty when the stamps were printed.

It was now planned to issue all the regional 3d values during the week beginning 18 August, but this depended on the essays being accepted without modification, other than very minor points of touching up. Ashdowne was told that if the Committee requested any major changes to the designs it could mean that the Isle of Man stamp would come out after the others.

COMMITTEE EXAMINES ESSAY

The Committee held its fifth meeting on 8 May when it examined the colour essays of the two designs. After some discussion it made 16 first choice but felt the heaviness of the shading beneath the Queen's head detracted from the overall attractiveness of the stamp. G V Kneale, as Acting Chairman, said there was a danger that this heaviness could become exaggerated in the printing. It was recommended that the printer should try to achieve a more gradual change of tone from light to dark beneath the Queen's head and above the word 'postage'. It was recognised this might not be possible. Design 14 was also considered attractive, and did not appear to present any practical problems, but was felt to be inferior to 16. The narrow white panel round the chain pattern had improved the 'general impression of freshness [but] resulted in the design of the chain-work not standing out so clearly'. It was also said that 'the stamp as a whole was too well balanced and symmetrical'. The minutes of the meeting were sent to Miss Knight by Ashdowne the same day.

The PMG, E Marples, was informed by PSD on 20 May that the Isle of Man Stamp Committee had unanimously recommended its first and reserve choice of designs, and he approved the choice. The next step was to seek the Queen's approval of the designs: the PMG agreed to this, and the same day wrote to Sir Michael Adeane, Private Secretary to the Queen. As well as submitting the two Isle of Man designs, the PMG also enclosed two designs each for the Jersey and Guernsey 3d stamps and four designs for the Northern Ireland 3d, 6d and 1s 3d stamps. The first choice for the Isle of Man stamp was marked 'I' and the reserve 'J'. The

PMG explained it was proposed to have rather less dark tone at the base of the Isle of Man stamp.

Sir Michael replied the following day saying that the Queen had approved all the designs as recommended and thought they were very good. However, she did not like the dress which appeared in design 'J' and hoped it would not be necessary for this design to be used. On 23 May the PMG replied that as the first choice had been approved the design 'J' would not be used.

In the absence of Miss Knight, F J Langfield of PSD wrote to the Supplies Department on 29 May, enclosing two essays of design 16. Langfield requested that Harrisons be instructed to start printing. Printing was on 'all-over Crown' watermarked paper. Two minor modifications were to be undertaken:

- (a) The graduation of tone from dark to light from the base to the centre of the stamp should be made smoother;
- (b) The horizontal bar of the 't' in postage was to be touched up.

On 2 June Langfield wrote to J H Nicholson telling him that his design 16 had been chosen. Nicholson was asked to provide biographical details and a description of the design, both to be used in publicity. A payment of 160 guineas was made to Nicholson as the additional fee for an accepted design.

Langfield informed Ashdowne on 5 June that Royal approval had been received and printing was going ahead. Ashdowne was asked to advise Nicholson that his success in designing the stamp was to remain confidential until the Press Notice was issued.

The Head Postmaster of Douglas, Mr Price, was unfamiliar with meeting the large number of requests from philatelists, so to assist him Ashdowne compiled a list of ten questions thought likely to be asked together with proposed answers. A copy of the list was sent to Miss Knight on 21 July who was asked to agree or amend the answers. Question 3 asked what treatment was to be given to applications for First Day Covers? The proposed answer stressed that the Post Office was not running a First Day Cover service for the Regional stamps. Requests that the Post Office affix stamps to envelopes were to be refused and the applicants told to make their own arrangements to buy the stamps, stick them on the envelopes and post them. Miss Knight added: 'Any cash or cover enclosed should be returned. The reply should be sent in an Official envelope which should not be stamped with adhesive stamps.' She pointed out that, whilst no First Day Cover service was offered, any person applying for stamps would have their orders sent under cover using the Isle of Man stamps and posted on the day of issue. Requests for positioned blocks, cylinder numbers, well centred stamps, etc, were to be refused as stamps were to be taken from the sheets as they come.

In February 1957 the Stamp Taxes Department of the Inland Revenue had preferred that either both or neither of the words 'Postage' and 'Revenue' appear on the new stamps, although would not make an issue of it if the word 'Revenue' was omitted. Miss Knight wrote to the Board of Inland Revenue on 22 July 1958 saying that in the event 'Revenue' had been omitted from the Isle of Man stamp design. This was noted by the Inland Revenue with some disappointment.

In March 1959 it was recorded that, of the essays supplied in April 1958, one of each of design 14 and 16 had been transferred to the Royal collection, while two of each had been retained for record purposes, with the remainder being destroyed by the Accountant General's Department.

ABOUT THE DESIGN

The stamp showed the portrait of the Queen, taken by Dorothy Wilding Portraits Ltd, with the 'Three legs of Man' in a shield in the top left-hand corner, bordered along the top and down both sides by a Celtic ring chain design. The Legs of Man, armoured and spurred, on a shield were the arms of the ancient Kingdom of Man. The legs were in the form in which they appeared on the Manx Sword of State, the 13th century weapon borne before the Lieutenant Governor at the annual Tynwald Assembly each year. The ring chain pattern forming the ornamental panels in the borders was taken from decorative carvings on Manx runic crosses. This characteristic pattern dated from the Norse period in the island's history.

NEW STAMP ISSUED

The stamps went on sale on 18 August 1958: they were only on sale over the counter on the Isle of Man and replaced the 3d stamp of the existing permanent series, being the same size and colour (violet). The new stamps were valid throughout the United Kingdom for postage and revenue purposes. The stamps were printed in sheets of 240, and were not available in books or rolls.

People not living on the Isle of Man were able to buy the stamps by post from the Head Post Office at Douglas. Those requiring stamps from more than one region, orders were to be sent to the Divisional Controller, London Postal Region.

During July 1963 several months' supply of the Isle of Man 3d stamps were printed on paper left over from the printing of a special 1961 commemorative issue: these were considered

by many as better in appearance. This issue totalled 1,080,000, of which 960,000 were sold on the island and the remainder through philatelic counters.

In January 1958 Supplies had estimated annual usage of the stamp as 15,000 sheets (3.6 million stamps) but in May as 20,000 sheets (4.8 million stamps). The earlier forecast was more accurate, as the stamp finally sold out in April 1969 having sold 35,959,420 including the 1,080,000 on chalky paper. When all the stocks of the 3d stamp was sold out they were replaced with the 3d definitive UK stamp.

THE ARTIST

JOHN H NICHOLSON RI, BWS, FIBD, was born on 23 April 1911. He was elected a member of the British Water Colour Society in 1939; a Fellow of the Institute of British Decorators and Interior Designers in 1948; and a Member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours (RI) in 1951. He held a one-man exhibition of Water Colours in London in 1948 and another in 1950. He designed and executed the shield bearing the Coats of Arms of the island and its four towns, which was a fixture on the Royal Yacht 'Britannia'. At the time of designing the stamp, Nicholson was on the staff of the Douglas Art School as a part-time master of interior decorating and lettering.

CHANGES TO VALUES AND COLOURS

On 7 February 1966 a new 4d stamp was issued in ultramarine; it had the same design as the 3d but did not replace it. A special first day of issue machine cancellation was used on covers bearing the stamps posted in the specially provided posting box at Douglas, Isle of Man. The design of the slogan was an envelope with the words 'First Day of Issue'. There were 4,353,840 of the stamps sold including 7,553 on first day covers. The stamps were sold out in November 1967. On 5 July 1967 the 4d was issued with two phosphor bands on Crown watermarked paper.

On 4 September 1968 new 4d and 5d stamps were issued. Again they used the same design as the 1958 3d, but the 4d was now olive sepia and the 5d was royal blue. These stamps were issued to meet new tariff requirements that were introduced on 16 September. Neither of the new stamps was printed on watermarked paper; the 4d had one centre phosphor band and the 5d two phosphor bands. PVA gum was introduced, replacing the Arabic gum that had been used since 1958.

An official first day envelope was available at 6d, available in advance from the Philatelic Bureau or from the Philatelic Counters at Glasgow, London Chief Office, Blackpool and

Liverpool and all the Crown Post Offices in the Isle of Man. A philatelic posting box was provided at Douglas. Again these stamps were only available from post offices in the Isle of Man and at the Philatelic Bureau and all the philatelic counters. Covers serviced by the Bureau were postmarked either 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh' or 'Douglas, Isle of Man'. There were 42,910 first day covers posted.

The 4d underwent a further colour change to red on 26 February 1969. The sepia 4d stamps were withdrawn at the close of business that day. The red 4d stamps were on sale in all post offices in the Isle of Man, the Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh and all philatelic counters in the UK. These counters now comprised: Belfast, Blackpool, Glasgow, Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, and the London Chief Office. There was no first day cover service for this release.

REQUEST FOR 2½d STAMP

Simultaneous with a request for a 2½d stamp came the call for a share in the philatelic revenue earned by the Post Office and the more radical and far-reaching request for the Isle of Man to have its own issue of commemorative stamps. These last two points are very much entwined in the issue of the 2½d stamp.

Towards the end of February 1963, G V H Kneale asked the Clerk of the Tynwald to include three questions in the Question Paper of 19 March. The questions, to be directed to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Ronald Garvey, asked the annual cost, revenue and profit to the Post Office in respect of the sale of postage stamps in the Isle of Man. Not having this kind of information to hand, the Government Secretary sought the advice of the Home Office. On 5 March the Home Office wrote to PSD asking how to reply to the request. Also enclosed was a cutting from the Isle of Man 'Examiner', dated 22 November 1962 which reported that Kneale had asked the Lieutenant Governor, in the Tynwald, whether permission could be obtained by the Isle of Man to issue a full set of its own stamps. The Governor had been in the Colonial postal services and was keenly interested in postage stamps. He replied that, although the Post Office were intent on keeping down the numbers and type of denominations of stamps, he would keep pressing for the island to have its own set of distinctive stamps and, if possible, to obtain part of the revenue from them.

F J Langfield replied to the Home Office on 13 March regretting that, not having the relevant information, he was unable to give precise answers to the three questions. Sales of postage stamps in the Isle of Man had amounted to £153,000 in the previous 12 months but, as far as he could judge, he doubted whether the postal service had produced a profit. He then stressed that the Post Office could not, in any circumstances, hand over any part of the philatelic revenue obtained from the Isle of Man 3d stamp.

It appears that Langfield's reply was an interim measure as the following day J R Baxter, also of PSD, wrote to the Accountant General's Department (AGD) asking whether it might provide a more detailed reply. N F Holman of the AGD replied on 18 March saying an assessment of the annual expenditure had been made. These costs were said to be about £170,000 a year, with an additional £35,000 a year spent on the conveyance of mail to and from the island. The revenue from the sale of postage stamps of all denominations on the Isle of Man came to just over £150,000 a year. A further £12,000 came from customers using franking machines or prepaying postage in cash. It was considered impracticable to assess the profit or loss derived from the stamps in any one area. The mail service was national and interlocking, one area handling, without prepayment, mail posted in other areas. Using these figures and his understanding of the financial position of the mails services Holman considered it unlikely that there was any profit made on mail originating in the Isle of Man.

During October 1961 the Governor had asked the Home Office to raise on the island's behalf the question of the issue of a 2½d stamp. The argument was that it was the rate of postage for pictorial postcards of which many thousands were sent each year. The initial response by the Post Office was Miss E A Knight's confirmation of continued opposition to local issues on the ground that any increase was to be avoided in the interests of efficiency. The Governor was disappointed but not surprised by this. He then wondered whether a high value UK stamp in the Castles series might feature a castle on the Isle of Man, possibly Rushen or Peel Castle. Reluctant to push the idea, the Governor told the Home Office he understood if they did not put it to the Post Office; it seems likely that the Home Office decided not to pursue this. At the end of March 1963, the Isle of Man Delegation was entertained by the Home Secretary at the House of Commons, when it was learnt by the Governor that the PMG had liberalised the policy as regards the issue of new pictorial stamps. This encouraged the Governor to ask the Home Office to raise again the question of a further stamp for the Isle of Man.

On 6 May the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Ronald Garvey, wrote to Sir Charles Cunningham, of the Home Office. Sir Ronald renewed his bid for a share in the philatelic revenue and to have a completely separate issue of postage stamps, a move that would involve a radical change of policy. In his opinion several overseas territories that had been given the privilege of issuing their own stamps were far less independent than the Isle of Man. The whole question, he believed, centred on the fact that the PMG ran the island's postal services and therefore controlled its stamp issues.

The Home Office wrote to PSD on 15 May enclosing the Lieutenant Governor's letter. K Hind of PSD replied in detail to S Burley on 15 May. Hind said there were two ways of tackling the question of issuing special Isle of Man postage stamps; either by extending the existing

arrangement of issuing a stamp in the permanent series bearing Isle of Man emblems and for sale only in that region, or by withdrawing postal services from the island and leaving the Government there to provide the postal services including issuing the necessary stamps.

The first possibility was thought likely to provoke similar requests from the other regions, namely Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey and Guernsey. Hind suspected Sir Ronald wished to see special regional commemoratives, but said that 'it would be virtually impossible to know where to stop'. If any part of the philatelic revenue were passed over to the island's authorities then the same would have to be done for the other regions concerned. The postal services of the island ran at a loss, and even with an increase in the number of special stamps, the position was unlikely to change. Hind did not think the Post Office could be expected to hand over philatelic revenue whilst generally subsidising the postal services.

The Lieutenant Governor had made mention of the postal administrations in the Colonies and Protectorates. This led to the second possibility, as seen by Hind, of which the constitutional implications rested with the Home Office rather than the Post Office. However, as an independent administration, the island would have to finance the postal services. There was no guarantee, even with a very liberal programme of special stamp issues, that the service could be self-supporting. Hind added that a number of more recently established nations were finding 'that this particular philatelic goose had a very limited supply of golden eggs', with indications that collectors quickly abandoned interest in the stamps of a nation once they felt they were being exploited.

Burley replied on 14 August that he did not see the need to pursue the suggestions that the island government should either issue its own stamps or share in the additional philatelic revenue that may or may not accrue from the sale of Isle of Man special stamps. However, Burley agreed with the Lieutenant Governor that it would be very useful to issue other denominations of Isle of Man stamps in addition to the current 3d, preferably the 2½d postcard rate, but if more than one then also the 2s minimum parcel rate.

Burley wrote again on 30 October explaining that, during a recent visit to the island, the Home Secretary arranged a meeting for December between members of the Government and including the Financial Secretary of the Treasury. The matter of procuring for the Isle of Man a share in Post Office profits was raised and scheduled for discussion in detail at the meeting. Burley said that the Post Office need not be represented at the meeting as the matter did not affect the Post Office and was of primary concern to the Treasury. Hind showed this letter to the Accountant General's Department which advised that the first thing to do was 'to educate Burley in the realities of our status - vide his comments about the appropriation of Post Office profits being the primary concern of the Treasury'. It was

possible, however, that what the Isle of Man had asked for was a share in what the Post Office paid to the Exchequer in lieu of taxes, as they were probably aware that the UK Treasury paid over to the Northern Ireland Exchequer a proportion of what it collected from the Post Office in taxes. Although there was no statutory provision for the financial settlement between the UK Exchequer and the Isle of Man Government, if they were to do so the Accountant General's Department was not likely to object.

On 8 November the Deputy Director General (DDG) W A Wolverson wrote to the DPS, K S Holmes, giving details of the request for a 2½d stamp. Holmes said it would be very difficult to refuse to do anything to meet the Lieutenant Governor's request. He saw no postal reason for having another Regional stamp, but that apart, the only negative argument was the small extra cost to produce and stock the extra denominations. He admitted this was unconvincing as the trouble and cost involved was so small. He then suggested that the Post Office go some way to satisfying the Lieutenant Governor's demand by increasing the Isle of Man denominations from one to two. This was seen as a concession rather than a final solution.

2½d STAMP PROPOSAL APPROVED

A proposal to issue a second specially designed stamp for the Isle of Man was put to the PMG at the end of November 1963. On 3 December Hind wrote to Burley confirming the PMG had approved the proposal. The stamp was to be the same size as the ordinary stamps with a value of 2½d, the basic postcard and printed-paper postage rate. The design was to be in the same style as the current Isle of Man 3d stamp. The date of issue was dependent on how soon a design became available, but thought probably not before mid 1964.

The Post Office could not agree to a pictorial stamp as this would have to be double the standard size to maintain the Queen's head as a dominant feature. Further, it would lead to requests for similar treatment for both other Regional stamps and the permanent series. As it would be unlikely that these requests could be resisted, there would be heavy costs for production and storage. Pictorial stamps were also unpopular with business users. However, although not agreeing to pictorial stamps, the Post Office had, that year, provided facilities for pictorial postmarks cancellations for tourist publicity. Two such postmarks were in use in Ramsey and in Douglas.

On 6 December the Home Secretary informed Sir Ronald of the decision by the PMG. This was announced at the meeting between Treasury officials and the island authorities arranged by the Home Office, and was favourably received. Later in December the DPS wrote to Sir Ronald explaining that the Post Office had been considering the procedure to be adopted to obtain a suitable design. It had taken two years from the initial decision in

1956 to issue a stamp, before the stamps were put on sale in August 1958. It was thought unlikely that this selection process could be streamlined if artists were again invited to submit designs. This would prevent the stamp from being ready in time for the tourist season in 1964. Since the new stamp was to be in the same size and style of the 3d stamp, it was thought unlikely that a fresh design competition would produce any designs 'markedly superior' to those in 1958. Sir Ronald was reminded that of the seventeen original rough designs submitted, The Committee felt three were worthy of completion. One was eventually issued, leaving the Post Office with two designs (14 by J H Nicholson and 10 by Miss M E Lockwood). It was suggested as reasonable to suppose that these two would merit serious consideration. The task of having these two designs revised for submission to the Queen would be very simple and speedy, making it feasible that the stamps could be printed and on sale by June 1964.

The DPS enclosed the artwork of the two designs, together with an essay of one of them for Sir Ronald to consider. The Post Office hoped for the recommendation as first choice the design by Nicholson that had been second choice for a 3d stamp, but this would be subject to the views of Sir Ronald. PSD warned Supplies in a memorandum dated 10 January 1964 that the issue of an Isle of Man 2½d was anticipated in the middle of the year, although it might be delayed until at least the end of the year if the Lieutenant Governor demanded a completely new design.

W B Kennaugh, Assistant Government Secretary, replied on 13 January that Sir Ronald had considered the time factor and agreed to the DPS's proposal. Kennaugh added that he understood Sir Ronald had spoken to the DPS about the possibility of changing the design of the 3d stamp, which had now been on sale for five years. Kennaugh asked for the DPS's views on the matter. T P Hornsey of PSD replied on 24 February in the absence of the DPS. He said the Post Office was glad the proposal had been agreed and explained the position regarding changing the design of the 3d stamp: 'Except in the case of the stamps of Queen Victoria, the designs of our permanent issues have remained unchanged for the whole reign of the Monarch.'

E R Davies, Government Secretary, wrote to T P Hornsey on 28 February saying that Sir Ronald had previously accepted the essay of the 2½d stamp 'provided that approval ... to change the design of the existing 3d stamp was given'. This letter was shown to K Hind, the DPS, by Hornsey. The DPS told Davies that 'quite frankly I am rather perturbed about this because it is quite clear that some misunderstanding has arisen'; he added that there was no question, as far as he was concerned, that approval rested on any undertaking by the Post Office to change the design of the 3d stamp. There was, however, a possibility that the design might be changed sometime in the near future, which the DPS explained: Without prejudice to the question whether Regional designs should be changed only when those of the general issue are changed, there would be little point in introducing a new

design at this point in time when there is a possibility that very shortly we might have to make yet further changes to meet decimal currency requirements. The most we can do is to promise to keep the matter in mind pending a decision on the decimal currency question.

The question of obtaining a completely new design ended when Sir Ronald wrote to the DPS on 12 March apologising for the mis-statement by Davies. Sir Ronald recognised that until the introduction of decimal currency the issue of a fresh design would not be appropriate. He hoped that, when the time came, the Post Office would look sympathetically on any proposition put forward by the Isle of Man.

Meanwhile on 3 February 1964 F J Langfield wrote to J H Nicholson indicating that the Post Office was to issue the 2½d stamp later that year (at this point 1 May was under consideration as the issue date). Langfield then added that he was glad to confirm that one of the designs submitted by Nicholson for the 3d stamp in 1958, which had been submitted to the Queen as second choice, had been chosen for the new stamp. The artist was asked to produce a 2½d value figure in white, superimposed on an acetate sheet, to replace the 3d. On 5 February, however, Langfield wrote again to Nicholson explaining that his first letter had been premature as the choice of design would not be known for another two or three weeks. Nicholson was told that should his design be selected then Langfield would write again about the fee, but if his design were not accepted he would receive payment of 4 guineas for the drawing of the value.

Langfield also wrote to Miss Lockwood (under her married name of Mrs Bonsall) on 5 February explaining that her design submitted for the 3d Isle of Man stamp in 1958 was now amongst those from which a choice would be made for the 2½d stamp. She was also asked to produce 2½d figures in white. The fees were as offered to Nicholson.

On 19 February Langfield informed the Supplies Department that Sir Ronald had agreed to use an unaccepted design from the 1958 competition and had stated his preference for Nicholson's design 14. He asked that the printers be instructed to produce essays of the designs by Nicholson and Lockwood. He added that the Post Office wished to have the stamps on sale by 1 June and asked if this date could be achieved. A J Tempest of the Supplies Department wrote to Harrisons on 27 February requesting six essays of each design in the shade of red used for the 2½d stamp in the permanent series. As it was hoped to issue the stamps on 1 June, he asked if the following timetable was acceptable:

Chosen design with printer – 28 February 1964

Essays to Post Office – 20 March 1964

Approved essays to printer – 3 April 1964

Completion of deliveries to Hemel Hempstead (100,000* sheets) – 4 May 1964

* subsequently revised to 80,000 sheets.

Tempest also asked for specimen stamps of the accepted design to be supplied for publicity purposes in April; in a note to PSD on 2 March, however, he stated:
Mr York has been most reluctant to supply blocks of stamps from proof sheets for publicity purposes, and it is preferable for your requirements to be issued from first supplies printed against a running warrant. Such sheets would be perforated, and printed from an approved proof sheet. Perhaps this could be borne in mind when dates for press meetings are being decided.

There is no further record in the files of 'specimen' stamps being requested for publicity purposes.

York of Harrisons replied on 9 March stating that the timetable was acceptable, and the essays were supplied on 23 March. From these three essays of each design were forwarded to PSD the next day.

On 1 April Don Beaumont of PSD informed Supplies that essays had already been sent to Sir Ronald Garvey for his approval, but that it was proposed to await return of the Channel Island 2½d essays so that all three sets could go to the Queen for her final decision at the same time. Howard Smith of Supplies replied on 3 April that this was likely to jeopardise the planned issue date, as there was already delay while improvements in the Jersey and Guernsey artwork were being sought, and Harrisons had little room for flexibility in a very heavy workload. His appeal that work on the Isle of Man issue might proceed immediately the essays were returned was nevertheless unsuccessful. By 1 May the deadlines for returning approved essays to the printers were past for both Channel Island issues as well as the Isle of Man; on that date H A Berry of Harrisons wrote to Tempest that the deadline for all three was now extended to 7 May.

When this deadline was exceeded in turn, PSD was told on 8 May that the 1 June issue date was now ruled out. The PMG, Reginald Bevins, had written to Sir Michael Adeane, Private Secretary to the Queen, on 6 May asking that essays of the two Isle of Man designs be put before the Queen. The PMG explained that, with the agreement of the island authorities, he recommended the Nicholson design and asked whether this was acceptable to the Queen. Sir Michael replied the following day that the Queen agreed with the PMG in choosing and approving the design by Nicholson. By 13 May approved essays had been returned for all three issues and were forwarded on that date by PSD. Despite earlier fears the planned issue date was finally delayed by only one week.

On 3 June a proof sheet of the Isle of Man issue was approved, subject to correction of various faults. Harrisons had warned that 'due to the urgency of this requirement some of the sheets may already have been printed'. Tempest asked York whether 'in the circumstances perhaps these faults could be borne in mind for correction at the next print'.

This seems to imply that the initial issue of the stamps included the reported defects. The faults listed were as follows:

General – Queen’s face badly spotted. Outline of ‘2½d’ indistinct.

row 2, stamp 3 – Queen’s face particularly bad.

row 4, stamp 1 – Blemish in background to right of Queen’s tiara.

row 10, stamp 5 – White patch right of 2½d shield.

row 18, stamp 10 – White spots between Queen’s lip and nose.

2½d STAMP ISSUED

The specially designed red 2½d stamp was put on sale in the Isle of Man on 8 June 1964. It took the place of the permanent series 2½d stamp, which was withdrawn. This stamp, together with ones in the same value for Guernsey and Jersey, was issued following requests for special stamps to be used on postcards. The stamp was printed on ‘all-over Crown’ watermarked paper. The design featured the three Legs of Man in a shield and a border of a Celtic ring chain, characteristic of the early Manx crosses. Items bearing the new stamp posted in the philatelic posting box at Douglas received a ‘First Day of Issue’ machine cancellation. There was no first day cover service provided by the Philatelic Bureau.

On 23 July J H Nicholson was paid 160 guineas (£168) for the drawing. Miss Lockwood was paid 4 guineas for the 2½d overlays.

The 2½d stamp was withdrawn on 31 August 1966, because of tariff increases, having sold 4,298,160 including 9,237 on first day covers.

Andy Pendlebury
March 1996

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- Post 122/567
- P1169/67

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- PBN2040, 11 December 1956;
- PB130, 16 July 1958;
- PB140F, 31 July 1958;
- PB264, 5 December 1963;
- PB43, 19 March 1964;
- PB83, 3 June 1964;
- PB9, 12 January 1966;
- PB172, 4 July 1968;
- PB222, 24 August 1968;
- PB3, 2 January 1969;
- PB18, 16 January 1969.

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