

STAMP DEFINITIVES

THE FIRST SCOTTISH REGIONAL STAMPS

Date of issue: 3d - 18 AUGUST, 6d & 1/3d - 29 SEPTEMBER 1958



When selecting designs for United Kingdom stamps, the Postmaster General (PMG) was assisted by an Advisory Panel, some members of which were nominated by the Council of Industrial Design (CoID) and some by the Post Office. However, for the Regional stamps the PMG proposed to invite 'committees representative of cultural and artistic interests in the countries concerned to advise on the designs submitted'. Thus on 25 July 1956 Sir Charles Cunningham of the Scottish Home Department and A G Robertson, Director of the Post Office (DPO) in Scotland, were invited to suggest qualified people.

Both Sir Charles and the DPO supplied lists from which the Post Office compiled eight names said to have 'special regional interest in heraldry and history, the arts and design, together with general culture':

H N Dinkel ARWS, ARCA (Head of the School of Design and Crafts, Edinburgh College of Art)
 Sydney Harrison (Editor of the 'Scottish Field', member of the Scottish Committee of the CoID)

T J Honeyman FRFPS, FRIS (Rector of Glasgow University)

Sir William Hutchinson RSA (President of the Royal Scottish Academy)

Sir Thomas Innes of Learney KCVO (Lyon King of Arms)

C d'O Pilkington Jackson FRBS, FRSA (Member of the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland)

H W Meikle CBE, MA, DLitt, LLD (Historiographer Royal for Scotland)

The Lady Sempill (Member of the Scottish Committee of the CoID).

With the exception of Honeyman, whose name was put forward by the DPO, the list was as suggested by the Scottish Home Department. The DPO's list also included Sir Thomas and

Sir William, together with the suggestion that the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland be consulted.

Discussions took place within the Post Office on the roles the committees were to play and whether or not the existing Advisory Panel should have the final say after the 'national' committees. It was felt inappropriate for these new committees to be subordinate to the Panel, which would not therefore play any formal part.

A meeting was held at Postal Headquarters (PHQ) in London on 13 September. Those present were R H Locke, Director of Postal Services (DPS), H N Pickering, F H Goldsmith and F J Langfield of the Postal Services Department (PSD), and A G Robertson, F E A Manning, and L J Taylor, the DPOs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively.

The DPS stressed that the DPOs were to arrange the first committee meetings as soon as possible. The committees would propose themes and symbols and suggest artists that might be invited to submit designs. This was to be achieved not later than two weeks after the first meeting. Although it had been decided to produce the stamps in two stages, the 2½d first, and the 4d and 1s 3d later, the committees were expected to deal with all the designs at the same time.

It was reiterated that pictorial stamps had been rejected and that the Queen's head must be dominant. Selecting a single artist for all designs was not considered satisfactory but was not ruled out. The preference was for about four artists each submitting about three designs. This would permit the essential requirement of providing a choice of designs to the Queen.

The committees were to select their own Chairmen, as it was clearly not feasible for the PMG to visit the various centres to take the Chair.

By late September all those invited, with the exception of Honeyman, had accepted to serve on the Committee for Scotland. Honeyman had declined because of other commitments and also because he felt that there were others better qualified to advise on such matters. This meant Glasgow was without a representative. The Scottish Home Department considered whether there was a need to balance the interests of Edinburgh and Glasgow, but decided there was not. Acting on this advice, the PMG did not look for a replacement for Honeyman.

On 2 October the DPS wrote to the DPO Scotland saying the first meeting could be arranged, warning that there might be a change to the plan to issue the 2½d stamps in advance of the other two denominations. The DPO would be kept informed, but at this stage it was thought best not to mention it to the Committee.

A Press and Broadcast Notice was issued on 19 October listing the members and their qualifications with a brief description of their duties. The work of the Committee was to fall into three parts: to advise about themes appropriate to Scotland which would appear in the border of the new stamps; to advise on the artists to submit drawings; to advise the PMG on the selection of designs. This third point would occur after the Post Office had determined the suitability of the designs.

The first meeting of the Committee was on 24 October: Lady Sempill was unable to attend. Sir Thomas Innes of Learney was elected Chairman. It compiled a list of symbols that might be used by artists and prepared notes giving general guidance on how the available space on the stamp could best be used.

The DPO wrote to S D Sargent, the Deputy Director General (DDG), the following day detailing the points raised. Sargent replied on 29 October with comments and advice.

The Committee suggested that around 12 artists be invited to submit preliminary designs and, following appraisal, a smaller number invited to complete their designs. The DDG reminded the DPO that there were five other sets of regional stamps to prepare and if this method was adopted it would mean 72 artists preparing and being paid for rough sketches, which would possibly be 'a matter for public criticism'. He suggested it would be better to follow the guidelines previously indicated by the PMG, under which the Committee would suggest the themes, together with any other ideas for consideration, for incorporation in the instructions for artists. The Committee's suggestion that artists be paid for preliminary sketches was agreed (this was usual practice).

The DDG reminded the DPO that once the preliminary sketches had been viewed in London from a technical standpoint, they would be forwarded to Scotland for the Committee's advice as to which might be taken to completion.

The Committee asked if the Queen's head could be 'offset slightly, without altering the size of the present portrait and without affecting its dominance, by moving it slightly on its axis to the upper dexter' to allow greater space for the design. Whilst reminding the DPO that a change in the position of the head which made it less dominant would 'run counter to the firm principle that this feature, on which international acceptance of the omission of the name of the country entirely depends, must be maintained', before a firm decision could be made it would be necessary to judge the effect on a particular design. The Committee raised the question of omitting the word 'Revenue': in the past the Inland Revenue had insisted that, apart from occasional special issues, 'Revenue' should appear on low value stamps, since they were valid for fiscal use. If the word was omitted it would lead to confusion and unnecessary enquiries and correspondence. However, Sargent pointed out

for the DPO's own information that some within the Post Office felt that if real improvement in design could be obtained by doing so, then this should over-ride the views of the Inland Revenue. outweigh the objection of the omission. Sargent suggested the DPO put the difficulties to the Committee and explain that if it wished to press the point it would be covered in the Instructions to Artists.

All these points were raised when the Chairman of the Committee wrote to the PMG on 5 November: he explained that the Committee felt, bearing in mind the specialised nature of the task, that it would be advantageous to invite 12 artists as Scottish artists had not been involved with designs of this kind before. These artists, he suggested, should receive a fee of 10 guineas for rough designs with a corner finished in one design. As a consequence possibly four of the artists would be commissioned to submit more finished work at the normal rates. A list of artists was enclosed:

Roy Benzies (Edinburgh College of Art)
J B Fleming (School of Art, Glasgow)
Gordon F Huntly (Glasgow)
George Mackie (Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen)
Conrad T McKenna (School of Art, Glasgow)
Mrs Elizabeth Odling (Glasgow)
G W Lennox Paterson (Glasgow)
Barrie Stuart (Edinburgh College of Art)
A B Imrie (Edinburgh)
John Pottinger (Edinburgh)
William McLaren (London)
Len Fullerton (Fife).

In a reversal of the procedure proposed by the PMG, the Chairman suggested that designs that the Committee found sufficiently promising 'from an artistic and public relations standpoint' would be recommended to the PMG for consideration of technical suitability. The Chairman justified this by stressing the special circumstances of the issue of Scottish stamps by Scottish artists.

Enclosing the list of Scottish symbols compiled by the Committee, the Chairman explained that the heraldic symbols had been placed first as some members had suggested these 'official symbols are the means by which alone the Scottish character of the stamps can be officially and legally denoted'.

Heraldic symbols:

Crowned Thistle (Scottish Crown)
Saltire
Lion Rampant in a treasured shield
Sejant lion

Unicorn (Crowned - may be collared and chained)

Any or all of the Honours of Scotland (Regalia).

Pictish/Celtic symbols and designs.

The Thistle (National floral emblem).

The Committee suggested several points to be considered for inclusion in the Instruction to Artists. One was that artists might choose to emphasise the Scottish character by drawing the figures and lettering as used in the 16th to 18th century. Clarification was sought on this and the Chairman referred the matter to Committee member and sculptor Pilkington Jackson. On 8 November Pilkington Jackson wrote that it was rather difficult to explain what it looked like. He enclosed photographs of two modern examples by himself. One was the panel in Dunkeld Cathedral to the eighth Duke of Atholl and the other an inscription on Acheson House in the Canongate. Jackson advised that, although the letters differed in each case, they were in the same style and quite different to those used on the present stamps.

On 20 November C J M Alport, the Assistant Postmaster General (APMG), wrote to Sir Thomas that the Post Office was working on comprehensive Instructions to Artists based on the suggestions. A copy would be forwarded once ready.

It was decided to send invitations to all the artists the Committee nominated. Alport explained it was usual practice to pay a fee of 20 guineas for each rough design submitted (subject to a maximum of 40 guineas to any one artist) and a further 20 guineas for each brought to completion. A further 160 guineas would be paid to the artist whose designs were chosen for use. Alport said the Post Office would like to keep to this arrangement and hoped it would be acceptable to the Committee.

On 10 December A G Robertson was advised by R H Locke that the Instructions to Artists had been prepared and incorporated all the Committee's proposals except one. The exception, 'in accordance with the APMG's recently expressed wishes', was that the artists were to decide whether to include or exclude 'Postage and Revenue'. Locke enclosed copies each with a covering letter, to be sent to each artist together with a photograph of Pilkington Jackson's lettering, once the Chairman had been consulted. The Chairman and Committee were pleased that the recommendations had been accepted. One minor point was raised when Pilkington Jackson suggested the photographs of his lettering should not be sent as they might unduly influence the artists, preferring instead that they refer to the references quoted in the Instructions.

INSTRUCTIONS TO ARTISTS

The invitations and instructions were sent on 12 December inviting artists to submit 'rough sketch proportional wash drawings'. The designs were to be four times the size of the current stamps. An approved photograph of the Queen's head, to be used in a reduced form in the final design, was enclosed; the photograph was four times the size of the head on the 2½d stamp and could be incorporated by the artists in their designs. If not used then the head could be indicated in rough but was to be no larger proportionally than the head in the present 2½d stamp or smaller than that in the ½d stamp.

It was explained why the words 'postage' and 'revenue' were used, being told that if omitting these words made for a better design, they could be omitted.

The artists were told that photogravure by which the stamps would be printed produced a number of graduated tones and therefore care was to be taken to use materials that would permit the photographing of each tone in its true value. A card showing the range of tone was enclosed, and the submitted drawings were to be as near as possible in the same colour, a kind of sepia-grey.

They were told about the fees, and were asked to send rough designs to the Director of Postal Services by 31 January 1957.

On 21 February the designs, having been examined in London, were sent, by R H Locke, to the DPO in Scotland. In all, 47 were submitted, as numbered below, of which ten sheets of bromides were prepared.

J B Fleming (1 to 7)

Roy Benzies (8 to 10)

Len Fullerton (11 to 13)

Don Pottinger (14 to 17)

Mrs Elizabeth Odling (18 to 20)

R Stuart Barrie (21 to 24)

G W Lennox Patterson (25 to 28)

George Mackie (29)

Gordon F Huntly (34 to 37)

Wm McLaren (34 to 37)

Conrad T McKenna (38 to 40)

A Imrie (41 to 47).

Locke advised the DPO that trial designs were of considerable philatelic interest and it was important that the drawings and bromides were treated as confidential, to be seen by no one outside of the Post Office other than the Committee, and returned once the preliminary

selection had been made. It was hoped to submit about five designs to the Queen from which she could choose three - one for each of the three denominations. The Committee was requested to select not less than five and no more than 10 of the sketches to be bought to completion.

Locke also made further comments on the designs.

A number of the designs show a Crown above the photograph of the Queen's Head. As she is wearing a coronet, this is not generally a happy arrangement. A similar arrangement on Colonial stamps has recently been the subject of much adverse criticism in the Philatelic Press on the grounds that the Queen cannot wear both Crown and Coronet at the same time. We could not, of course, alter the photograph of Her Majesty.

Although Locke refers to the headdress as a coronet, it is a diadem. Don Staddon, philatelic writer, later stated:

In the Wilding photograph Her Majesty The Queen is wearing a diamond diadem (completely circular head ornament) ... It was originally designed for King George IV to be worn outside a Cap of State. Worn in succession by Queen Victoria, Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary it first adorned the head of Queen Elizabeth II when she opened the first Parliament of her reign before her Coronation and has been worn regularly since.

(*'British Philatelic Bulletin'*, Vol. 23, No. 8, p. 165, April 1986.)

Some 18 of the designs showed the denomination 2½d, 16 had 4d and 13 with 1s 3d.

Although the denomination need not affect the selection, where the value 'fourpence' was shown in letters (nos 1, 8, 10, 30 and 34) the word could not be readily replaced by 'one shilling and threepence' or 'twopence halfpenny'. If any of these five designs were selected for the 2½d or the 1s 3d stamps the value would have to be shown in Arabic figures. In any event, having seen all the designs, the view of the Post Office was that it would be preferable for all the stamps to show the values in Arabic figures. Such figures should be no smaller than those on the current 2½d stamps. However, on some of the designs submitted (eg, 19) the value was much too small.

It was thought that the unicorns on some of the designs might 'detract from the dominance of the head'. This was made worse on designs 18 and 20 by the fact that the head had been sketched slightly smaller than the smallest permissible size. Two photographs of a suitable size were enclosed for trial on the drawings.

Locke concluded by pointing out that sketch 6 was the wrong shape and that the wording on sketch 38 should read 'Postage Revenue' and not 'Postal Revenue'.

The Committee met on 25 February and selected seven of the drawings for taking to completion. The recommendations of the Committee, together with detailed suggestions

for the artists whose designs had been nominated, were forwarded to Postal Headquarters by A G Robertson on 27 February.

On 7 March the Post Office Board met, during which A G Robertson raised the question of the watermark on the Scottish stamps in connection with the statement in the Progress Report that Royal approval had been given in January to omit 'E2R' from the watermark of all stamps issued by the Post Office.

The following day R H Locke wrote to A G Robertson reminding him that the Post Office had consulted Sir Charles Cunningham of the Scottish Home Department on the matter. The difficulties of distinguishing between the St Edward's Crown and the Scottish Crown were explained, whilst also referring to the practical difficulties of maintaining two stocks of paper. Sir Charles accepted the argument about distinguishing between the two crowns and agreed that the same watermark should be used for the stamps sold in both countries. The Post Office agreed that it would try and avoid any reference to the St Edward's Crown in the description of the new watermark.

It was later said that the watermark 'E2R and a Crown' caused damage to the paper by the angular nature of the E and the 2. Therefore, 'in the interests of better paper manufacture and printing' the change was made.

On 5 April S D Sargent wrote to the APMG, K Thompson, enclosing a summary of the Committee's suggestions with comments added by the Post Office.

Design 37 - First choice for the 2½d value.

The Committee suggested that the Crown and the two top Celtic knots be removed and the top centre of the design modified as necessary. The Post Office made no comment on this design.

Design 3 - Second choice for the 2½d value.

The Committee suggested that the leaves at the side of the oval might be made slightly more 'derivate of a conventionalised thistle'. The value should be altered to 2½d, and the approved photograph of the Queen's head replace the sketched head. The Post Office made no comment on this design.

Design 29 - First choice for the 4d value.

The Committee merely stated that the sketch of the Queen's head should be replaced by the approved photograph. The Post Office felt that showing the value four times seemed to be 'overdoing matters'. Also the figure, in each case, was smaller than the minimum specified (ie, as on the current 2½d stamp).

Design 32 - Second choice for the 4d value.

The Committee said the sketch of the Queen's head should be replaced by the approved photograph and the value '2½d' be changed to '4d'. The Post Office made no comment on this design.

Design 43 - First choice for the 1s 3d

The Committee recommended that the Crown either be re-drawn to resemble the Scottish Crown more closely or that the letters 'ER' replace the Crown. The portrait of the Queen might be raised slightly. The value tablet might be modified, and the denomination changed from 4d to 1s 3d. It was suggested the artist be asked to submit one design with the Scottish Crown and one without. The Committee considered this design so favourably that if it was not accepted for the 1s 3d value it be adopted for the 2½d.

The Post Office pointed out that the Crown in juxtaposition with the 'coronet' worn by the Queen was a feature of some colonial stamps and had been the subject of adverse criticism. The unicorns tended to make the Queen's head less dominant than preferred. It was agreed that the artist asked to prepare two revised designs - one with a Scottish Crown and one with 'ER', but thought a design with 'ER' was likely to prove more acceptable.

Design 5 - Second choice for the 1s 3d.

The Committee suggested that, if possible, more space should be left between the mouths of the unicorns and the diamond shape framing the portrait of the Queen. The sketch of the Queen's head should be replaced by the approved photograph: the value '4d' be changed to 1s 3d. The Post Office made no comment.

Design 20 - Third choice for the 1s 3d value

The Committee suggested the Crown be removed from the top of the design and 'ER' and the forelegs of the unicorns rearranged: the value '1s 3d' should be enlarged. The sketch of the Queen's head should be replaced by the approved photograph and it should be raised. The Post Office made no comment.

S D Sargent suggested that the designs should be shown to Sir Francis Meynell before the artists were asked to take them to completion. He considered the position rather delicate, but did not state why, and felt any points raised by Sir Francis should be passed on to the artists and the Scottish Committee without any reference to their origin.

Sargent concluded that, before the final choice was made from the finished designs, it would be necessary to get colour essays prepared by the printers. The purpose was to ensure that the colours of the 4d and 1s 3d stamps could be distinguished from the standard 1d and 1½d stamps.

S D Sargent, accompanied by Miss E A Knight of PSD, visited Sir Francis with the seven designs. Sir Francis thought the designs were generally most attractive and considered 43 the most promising and 29 the weakest. Regarding design 43 he agreed that perhaps the Queen's head was not as dominant as it might be, and considered this could be improved by reducing the width of the staffs, as had already been suggested. Another method might be to include the Queen's head in the size used for the 2½d stamp but with more of the neck removed. Also the head might be placed slightly more to the left. It was agreed that if the larger head were used it was unlikely there would be room to include the Scottish Crown at the top of the design and that the alternative of showing 'ER' was not likely to be satisfactory, especially if drawn as a cypher. He thought it be best to have neither the Crown nor ER and instead the tassels on the standards be rearranged to fill the space. It was agreed to ask the artist to prepare three variations of the design - one with the Scottish crown, one with 'ER', and one with neither.

Regarding drawing 29, Sir Francis agreed with the suggestion of omitting the two top '4d' but made no suggestion as to replacements. Of the alternative designs he liked 5, but objected to 32 on the grounds that the St Andrew's Cross linked with the crown suggested that the crown was crossed out.

The designs were submitted to Mr Coulton of Harrison and Sons, the stamp printers, for comments on technical aspects, which were circulated to PSD in a memorandum as follows:
2½d First choice - design 37

The alternation of black and white lines forming the cord round the Queen's head were rather too fine to print satisfactorily. The brush of the thistle should also be treated in a simpler fashion by reducing the number of stripes in the drawing.

2½d Second choice - design 3

The fine lines framing the surround to the head should be eliminated.

4d First choice - design 29

The figures at the foot of the columns would print legibly in the size as drawn, but the detail of the side columns was very fine and, when printed, it would not be possible to distinguish the individual components of the design.

4d Second choice - design 32

The detail on the crown was almost too fine for satisfactory reproduction; it would be an advantage if this could be modified to give less detail.

1s 3d First choice - design 43

All the detail in this design was far too fine for satisfactory reproduction. The staffs could not be reduced in width as had been suggested and the whole design should be simplified

considerably. To meet the difficulty of lack of dominance of the Queen's head Coulton suggested that the background could be produced in half-tone thus making the head more contrasting. Coulton felt that the artist should get in touch with Harrisons for guidance as to the degree of simplification necessary.

1s 3d Second choice - design 5

The fine black line bordering the surround should be broadened.

1s 3d Third choice - design 20

Coulton considered the words 'Postage Revenue' too small to reproduce effectively. The chains were very fine and would only be just about distinguishable.

A memo circulated in PSD on 29 April states that design 43 was shown to Sir George Bellew. He was asked 'whether there were any heraldic objections to the use of a crown above the photograph of the Queen in which she was wearing a coronet'.

Sir George is reported as replying:

The headdress the Queen was wearing in the photograph that appeared in the design was, correctly, a tiara, not a coronet. As it was definitely not a coronet of rank then a crown could appropriately be placed above the photograph, but from a design point of view the Queen could obviously not wear both crown and tiara at the same time. This particular tiara, although not symbolic of rank, was symbolic in design and had been worn by members of the Royal Family down the generations - it used to be worn by George IV over his hat, and was worn by the Queen, for example, when she drove to the State Opening of Parliament, although exchanged for the Crown when she performed her duty in the House itself.

Whether the use of the word 'tiara' is correct is doubtful; Don Staddon referred to it in his 'British Philatelic Bulletin' article as a diadem. Although the production files refer throughout to 'tiaras' this should be taken to mean a 'diadem'.

The memo continues:

Sir George also said that it was not correct to speak of the 'St Edward's crown': the crown with which the Queen had been crowned was, correctly, the Queen's crown although it bore a greater resemblance to the crown of St Edward than did the crown worn by her father. He thought this point would be of interest in discussing symbolism with Scotland.

There may have been some confusion: all monarchs are crowned with the crown of St Edward, but subsequently during the ceremony, and later at state occasions such as the opening of Parliament, the monarch wears the Imperial State Crown. The St Edward's crown is not used again.

Sir George said that the border round the design on the standard carried by the left-hand unicorn should be two lines with the fleur de lys pointing, alternately, outwards and inwards. He added that the number of fleur de lys in the border was immaterial. As examples of the detail drawn correctly and incorrectly he cited the Queen Elizabeth II half crown and the earlier George VI 2s 6d stamp respectively.

R H Locke wrote to A G Robertson on 2 May saying that the PMG accepted the Committee's recommendations that drawings 3, 5, 20, 29, 32, 37 and 43 be brought to completion.

The PMG accepted the Committee's suggestions regarding modifications to these seven drawings together with proposals put forward by PSD. A summary of the proposed further instructions, including these points plus others from the printers, was enclosed. Where the Committee proposed that the denomination be changed, the instructions asked the artist to prepare alternative detachable tabs. This was to maintain flexibility regarding the particular designs to be used for any given denomination and was applied as follows: For design 3 a detachable tab showing the value 2½d as an alternative to '1/3' shown on the original sketch.

For design 5 a detachable tab showing '1/3' as an alternative to '4d' shown on the original sketch.

For design 32 a detachable tab showing '4d' as an alternative to '2½d'.

For design 43 a detachable tab showing '1/3' as an alternative to '4d'. With this design the artist was free to modify the shape of the panel to accommodate the alternative value if thought desirable.

Locke asked that the Chairman of the Committee be shown the summary in case he had any additional points before the final instructions were given to the artists.

Having studied the draft of the final instructions, the Chairman called a meeting of Committee members resident in Edinburgh to discuss a few points. In design 29 the Committee felt strongly that to omit the numerals at the top corners, or to replace with some other motif, would upset the balance of the design. Regarding 43 the Committee felt that to illustrate the variations by means of overlays would not do it justice and strongly recommended that the artist be asked to draw afresh the variations suggested.

Robertson relayed these points to Locke who replied on the 28 May saying it was still felt that having four '4d' on design 29 was too much, but as the Committee felt so strongly, its view was accepted.

The Committee's views were also met with regards to design 43 by asking the artist to complete three drawings. This, it was pointed out, might result in the artist asking for additional payment. Already the artists' fees for the Scottish designs were more than for any other Regional stamps.

PAYMENT TO ARTISTS

On 29 May, as stipulated in the instructions to Artists, all but one was sent payment of 40 guineas: G Mackie received 20 guineas.

The artists were asked to provide completed designs by 24 June. The printer's final comments would be sought and bromides obtained in order that the Committee could select the designs to be produced as colour essays. The six artists, E Odling, W McLaren, G F Huntly, A B Imrie, J B Fleming and G Mackie, submitted their final designs by the due date.

Having carefully examined these designs the Committee listed them in order of preference:

9 (originally 37): W McLaren (first choice for 2½d value)

1 and 2 (originally 3): J B Fleming (second choice for 2½d value - two variations)

5 (originally 29): G Mackie (first choice for 4d value)

4 (originally 32): G F Huntly (second choice for 4d value)

6, 7 and 8 (originally 43): A B Imrie (first choice for 1s 3d value - three valuations with alternative value tabs)

3 (originally 5): J B Fleming (second choice for 1s 3d value)

10 and 11 (originally 20): E Odling (third choice for 1s3d value - two variations).

This new numbering system was used for orders to Supplies Department for the bromides, but was quickly abandoned.

On 9 August S D Sargent, A Wolstencroft and Miss E A Knight showed the finished drawings to Sir Francis Meynell, who commented:

9 (first choice for 3d*) - Sir Francis said the lettering was not Scottish, but was very pleasant all the same. He much preferred this design to either of the two alternatives for the 3d denomination.

1 and 2 (second choice for 3d) - These two were not thought to be anywhere near as good as design 9, but of the two he preferred design 2.

5 (first choice for 6d) - He thought it was a bit much to have 4d shown four times, but it was explained that the Committee insisted on this. He thought the design was very attractive.

4 (second choice for 6d) - The Queen's head was not correctly positioned and should be more to the right. He did not think the general public would understand the 'crossed out crown' and thought it was an 'unsatisfactory arrangement'.

6, 7 and 8 (first choice for 1s 3d - Of the three variations in this design, Sir Francis considered 6 was excessive with both the crown and the Queen's 'tiara'. He preferred 7 (with ER in place of the crown). Regarding 8 he felt the staffs would not show up well against the light background to the Queen's portrait. Of the varying ways of showing the denomination he preferred the dark lettering on a white background.

3 (second choice for 1s 3d) - Sir Francis said he did not like this design.

10 and 11 (third choice for 1s 3d) - Sir Francis thought both variations of this design were muddled as there was no adequate distinction between the Queen's head and the beasts.

(*It had been agreed to increase postage rates. The new stamps would be issued in the 3d and 6d denominations instead of the 2½d and 4d as originally planned. The 1s 3d remained unchanged.)

On 22 August the artists were advised that postage rates were to change and asked to supply detachable tabs for the new values.

On 3 September S Robson of Supplies wrote to H A Berry of Harrisons requesting bromides of Fleming's designs 3 (both variants) and 5 as they stood, and Odling's design 20 (both variants) with larger size figures for which artwork was attached. These were supplied on 6 September. Further bromides of Mackies' 29 and Huntly's 32 were ordered on 16 September and supplied on 19 September. Finally on 19 September bromides were ordered of McLaren's 37 and all three variants of Imrie's 43 - each of the three was required in two versions, with the value on either a light or dark background. These were supplied on 25 September. All bromides showed the new values where applicable - 3d on 3 and 37, 6d on 29 and 32, 1s 3d on 5, 20 and 43.

The Committee could now select those designs for which colour essays would be prepared in readiness for submission to the Queen. A G Robertson proposed a meeting for 7 October: the APMG had said he was willing to attend meetings at which definite recommendations were due to be made and therefore agreed to be present.

The APMG attended accompanied by his Private Secretary, J R Baxter, and Miss E A Knight. The Chairman was prevented from attending: he was shown the designs at a later date and agreed with the decisions taken. Lady Sempill and Mr Meikle were also unable to attend.

The Committee was shown bromides and artwork of the seven selected designs. Where there was more than one version of a design these were differentiated by letters (the original numbering was used). The Committee's conclusions were as follows:

For the 3d denomination
Design No. 37 (W McLaren), without modification.

For the 6d denomination -
Design 32 (G F Huntly), with the bottom left-hand motif slightly modified to make it clear that the crown encircled the saltire. The artist was to be instructed to darken the base of both the Fleur de Lys and lower rim on the crown to make it encircle and stand out from the saltire.

For the 1s 3d denomination -
Design 43C (A B Imrie), with modifications, which would make it resemble 43E, but with 'ER' smaller than in the present 43C, above the Queen's head. The artist to be instructed to replace the existing Queen's head by one of a size intermediate between that shown in design 43C and that in 43E, but with a light background. The base of the portrait should be in the same position on the stamp, but to allow more space for the larger portrait at the top, the cipher ER should be shortened and contracted to some extent. The shading on the light background should be brought down to a level that would show up the lower edge of the tiara. It was also noted that the Committee 'rather liked' the treatment of 'the light staffs merging in with the light background' on 43E.

Miss Knight raised a point about the ER to the left of design 37. The Committee felt it would prefer this to be retained as drawn in the design, but if the Queen objected to this unofficial cypher then it should be replaced by another 3d.

It was recommended that design 3B by J B Fleming be submitted to the Queen as an alternative to 37 for the 3d, with the amendment of a light background to the Queen's head. The Committee was reluctant to suggest an alternative for designs 32 and 43C as it considered both very good and felt there was a danger that either might not be selected if an alternative was presented. For design 3B the artist was to be instructed to replace the Queen's head used by one on a light background; it should also be slightly larger so that head and background extended to include the inner white line of the ovoid frame; finally the head was tilted slightly backwards and should be reset upright as in design 3A.

The following day S D Sargent wrote to the PMG with the recommendations. Sargent felt it would not be right to give the Queen no choice in relation to two of the denominations and therefore 3B was to be presented as a general alternative for any denomination.

Sargent requested permission to ask the printer to prepare colour essays of the four designs chosen. These were expected to take two weeks and it was hoped that the Committee would not call for any further modifications.

There was still a considerable amount of work to be done and it was impossible to say at that stage when the stamps would be issued, except that it was expected to be about the middle of the following year. It was currently proposed that the 3d stamps be issued simultaneously for all the six regions (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man) in May or June. It was planned that the other two denominations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland be issued, again simultaneously, about September.

On 11 October Miss E A Knight sent design 37 to the printers and requested that six colour essays be prepared in the 3d value, in violet and without modification. She explained that the other three designs had been returned to the artists for the various modifications to be carried out. The artwork for 3B had been returned to Fleming at the artist's request so that he could tidy up the lettering, while Huntly would make alterations to the crown and saltire on 32. Imrie had indicated in September that he was prepared to completely redraw any of his designs that reached the stage of final selection, and would accordingly do this with 43C. Harrisons had commented that there was too much detail in the design as it stood for successful photogravure reproduction.

Miss Knight wrote to Imrie when returning his artwork that the planned production schedule was falling behind and early completion would be appreciated. His finished design was forwarded to Harrisons by Miss Knight on 15 October.

Once the artists had completed the necessary revisions and forwarded artwork to the printers, Harrisons was to make the necessary improvements to the Queen's head on 3B and supply six essays in each of the colours violet, purple and green, in the 3d value. Six essays of design 32 in purple in the 6d value were requested; Miss Knight also provided a rough sketch for the printers to check that Huntly had added shading as required in the areas indicated. No requirement for essays of 43C was stated, although one obviously followed.

On 27 November the Post Office received the essays from Harrisons:

3d violet - J B Fleming design 3B

3d purple - J B Fleming design 3B

3d green - J B Fleming design 3B

3d purple - G Huntly design 32

1s 3d green - A B Imrie design 43C

3d violet - W McLaren design 37.

On 6 December, following examination at Postal Headquarters, two essays of each design and colour variation were sent by Miss Knight to A G Robertson for forwarding to the Committee.

No comment was made on design 37, the first choice for the 3d.

The lower rim of the crown and the base of the Fleur de Lys in design 32, the first choice for the 6d denomination, had been darkened as requested by the Committee. However, the portrait of the Queen, which had been centrally placed on the bromide, now seemed to have moved slightly to the left. This was not considered satisfactory.

There was also unease about the colour of this stamp. Although it had been printed in the same colour and strength as the present 6d, the effect was different. This was because the present 6d was a 'light' design and appeared pale purple, whereas the Scottish stamp was a 'dark' design and therefore appeared darker. It was felt that this made it insufficiently like the present 6d or as different from the 2d as was desired. It was thought that, despite the Scottish design being quite bold and distinct, the public and the counter staff would have difficulty distinguishing it from the 2d. As it was necessary to have a fresh essay of this design, it was suggested that the light and dark parts be reversed so that the background was light.

Design 43, first choice for 1s 3d, had been modified as the Committee suggested. It was acknowledged, however, that the shading on the light background to the Queen's head may not have been intensified as much as the Committee had in mind. This could be attended to if the Committee still felt it desirable.

Design 3B, the reserve for all denominations, drew no comment except that the version printed in purple was perhaps more readily recognised as a 6d stamp than the first choice for that denomination.

There was the possibility that some rearrangement of the Committee's original choice for the three denominations would overcome the difficulties with the 6d stamp. From the Post Office's point of view design 37 would be satisfactory for the 1s 3d but, because of the dark background, not for the 6d; design 32 was thought suitable for the 3d but not for the 1s 3d as it might be mistaken for the green 1½d; design 43 would be suitable for the 3d but not for the 6d, again because of the dark background. Design 3B was said to be suitable for any denomination.

The Committee met on 10 December and made the following recommendations:

3d – design 32

6d – design 3B

1s 3d – design 43

Reserve – design 37.

The Committee maintained its preference for design 43 for the 1s 3d seeing it as 'the most demonstrably Scottish design particularly for overseas and the most important and effective Scottish stamp in the series'. It was thought to need slight modification in that the tone of the Queen's head seemed too dark in comparison with other stamps and the background of the oval should be very slightly darker behind the 'tiara'.

Having seen the stamps in colour the Committee felt strongly that design 3B was more effective than design 37. The Committee recommended that when the denominations were changed on design 3B and 32 the new values should be in the same style as on design 32. The Committee agreed that the Queen's portrait in design 32 should be returned to the central position shown on the bromide.

On receiving this information, Miss Knight wrote to H A Berry of Harrisons on 16 December, explaining that further essays were required since the Committee had recommended modifications. These were simple tasks and therefore the printer was asked to carry out the work, rather than referring back to the artists.

Of design 3B an essay was required showing '6d' drawn in the same style as the 6d on design 32. There were doubts on the colour of this stamp and so four essays were required of the new design printed in the same strength of ink as used originally for the purple version of this design and four essays printed in a paler tone, much nearer the present 6d stamp.

The 6d in design 32 was to be replaced by 3d in the same style of lettering, and the Queen's head returned to the central position it occupied on the bromide. Six essays in violet were requested.

Finally, on design 43, the tone was to be reduced on the Queen's face, and the background of the oval was to be made slightly darker behind the Queen's 'tiara'. Six essays were requested.

The artists whose designs were to be altered were informed, and all initially agreed. However, Fleming only agreed with some reservations and subsequently sent an alternative version direct to the printers. It was agreed by the Post Office that this version could be used.

The requested essays were supplied on 15 January, although the 3d essays were in purple.

The essays bearing the modifications were sent to Scotland on 20 January 1958 (the files contain no comment as to why the 3d essays were supplied in purple instead of violet as

requested, or if what steps if any were taken about this). The Committee met on 7 February and confirmed its unanimous approval of the three stamps.

On 25 February the Chairman wrote to A G Robertson suggesting that, since the new stamps were not to be issued simultaneously, it might be prudent to publish pictures of the three stamps so that the public could see all the symbols that were used in the series. It was argued that this might prevent complaints arising when the first denomination was issued that particular symbols had been ignored.

This was relayed to PSD: S D Sargent replied on 7 March that in the past photographs had usually been held back until a day before the issue of the stamps. With no interval between the two events the risk was avoided of poor reproduction in the press 'leading to unjustifiable criticism of the stamps'. However, it was recognised that there was 'a good deal of weight' in the argument put forward by the Lord Lyons, which was of course subject to the PMG's final decision.

The need for one further essay had arisen when, owing to difficulties in obtaining the dye used in the past, it became necessary to use a lighter purple ink for all 6d stamps. On 6 March Miss Knight wrote to the printers asking that six essays of design 3B be supplied as quickly as possible so that they could be submitted to the Palace. Essays of 3B in the new purple showing the 6d value were supplied on 26 March.

S D Sargent wrote to the PMG, Ernest Marples, on 12 April stating that the Scottish Committee had unanimously recommended four designs that were enclosed. Further, it had recommended the designs be allocated as follows:

32 for the 3d stamp
3B for the 6d stamp
43 for the 1s 3d stamp
37 as reserve for any denomination.

This was a change from the original choice:

37 for the 3d stamp
32 for the 6d stamp
43 for the 1s 3d stamp
3B as a reserve.

Sargent said he saw no valid ground for objecting to the re-arrangement, and went on to say that the next step, if the PMG approved, was to seek the Queen's approval of the designs.

On 17 April 1958 the PMG wrote to Sir Michael Adeane, Private Secretary to the Queen, asking that the four designs be considered. The PMG explained that the Committee believed that the first three designs and particularly the second and third were 'immediately and strikingly recognisable as Scottish, and ... [were] sure to appeal to Scottish people at home and overseas'.

Martin Charteris, Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen, replied two days later saying that the Queen approved the first three designs and considered them all preferable to the reserve design.

PSD wrote to Supplies Department on 25 April requesting that the printers be instructed to start production of the Scottish stamps. Two sets of approved essays were enclosed. PSD wrote again on 28 April asking that Supplies Department ensure the stamps were printed on 'All-over Crown' watermarked paper. The following day Supplies informed the printers that forecast annual usage of each new stamp was: 3d - 1,400,000 sheets (336 million stamps); 6d - 120,000 sheets (28.8 million stamps); 1s 3d - 40,000 sheets (9.6 million stamps). The previous estimate, on 14 January, had been 300 million 3d, 24 million 6d and 8.4 million 1s 3d; both estimates were ultimately proved excessive.

In March 1959 it was recorded that one of each of the essays had been transferred to the Royal Philatelic Collection. Representative essays were retained for record purposes, while the remainder was destroyed by the Accountant General's Department.

FINAL PAYMENT TO ARTISTS

Miss E A Knight wrote to W McLaren on 9 May regretting that the Committee had decided not to adopt his finished design for use. She also wrote to J B Fleming, A B Imrie, and G F Huntly with payment of 160 guineas each as the additional fee for an accepted design. The acceptance of the fee was taken by the Post Office as agreement to 'assign to the Postmaster General the copy-right in the drawing'.

NEW REGIONAL STAMPS ANNOUNCED

On 31 July 1958 the Post Office held a press conference for the Regional stamps. It was felt that 'this recognition of the ancient status of the countries and islands concerned under the British Crown will give pleasure to their people who, whilst proud of their common allegiance, cherish their national and regional tradition'.

There were 12 new stamps: 3d, 6d and 1s 3d for Wales and Monmouthshire, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and 3d for Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man. All the 3d stamps would go on sale on 18 August and the 6d and 1s 3d on 29 September.

The new stamps would be on sale only in the areas they represented and replace the existing permanent series in the appropriate denominations but valid throughout the United Kingdom for postage and revenue. They were the same size and colour as the standard definitives: 3d violet, 6d purple and 1s 3d green.

The stamps were produced by photogravure by Harrison and Sons Ltd, who had produced the ½d to 1s 6d stamps for the Post Office for many years. The stamps were printed on paper bearing a watermark of a crown only. This new watermark would be introduced for all postage stamps as stocks of the existing paper were used up.

The stamps were printed in sheets of 240 and were not available in books or rolls, and therefore not available from vending machines.

The Post Office did not provide a first day cover service for these stamps. The Scottish stamps were available by post for people living outside of Scotland from the Head Post Office, Edinburgh. If stamps of more than one area were required then applications could be made to the Divisional Controller, King Edward Building, London.

DESCRIPTIONS OF DESIGNS

The Queen's portrait, taken by Dorothy Wilding Portraits Limited, was prominent on all three designs.

The 3d stamp, in violet, depicted two versions of the Scottish national badges. At the bottom left was the Saltire encircled by a Crown (the Queen's Saltire Badge). The Saltire (ie, the St Andrew's Cross) is the statutory (1385) and duly registered identity badge of Scotland. It was shown in the special form where it was 'environed of an open Crown', as used prior to King James V. In this form it is found as a Royal Badge and connected with the Order of the Thistle. The Crowned Thistle (the Queen's Royal Badge for Scotland) was shown on the right. The crown shown was the Crown of Scotland, with a slightly dipped top as seen at certain periods in the 17th century. The words 'Postage' and 'Revenue' framed the Queen's portrait at the sides, with the value beneath.

The 6d stamp, in purple, showed the portrait of the Queen in a simple frame, flanked by the instantly recognisable national plant symbol, the Scottish Thistle, shown conventionally on

a dark ground. The words 'Postage' and 'Revenue' were in scrolls at the base of the frame, with the value 6d between them.

The 1s 3d stamp showed two crowned and collared Unicorns flanking the Queen's head. Unicorns are the unique heraldic beast of Scotland. The one on the left supported a flag showing a Lion Rampant, the Queen's Scottish ensign, and the one on the right supported a flag showing the St Andrew's Cross. The flag tassles were in the form of thistles and the letters 'ER' were above the Queen's portrait. At the bottom of the portrait was the value panel, together with the words 'Postage' and 'Revenue'.

THE ARTISTS

The designer of the 3d stamp, Gordon F Huntly DA, MSIA was born in 1923 in Glasgow. He was educated at the High School of Stirling and the Glasgow School of Art. He became a Newbury Medallist in 1949, a Bellahouston Scholar in 1950 and was elected as a member of the Society of Industrial Artists in 1952. At the time of designing the 3d stamp he was on the teaching staff of the Glasgow School of Art.

The 6d stamp was designed by John B Fleming DA, MSIA. He was born in 1912 and educated at Dumbarton Academy. Fleming was awarded the Diploma in Mural Painting at the Glasgow School of Art in 1934, and in 1935 obtained a Post Diploma. He was a freelance illustrator and cartoonist for the 'Glasgow Herald' and 'Scottish Field'. He was a member of the Society of Industrial Artists and also a member of the Society of Scottish Artists. Since 1945 he had been on the permanent staff of the Glasgow School of Art teaching design.

A B Imrie, who designed the 1s 3d stamp, was educated at George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, and the Edinburgh School of Art. He won the Royal Scottish Academy Travelling Scholarship for Drawing and Painting and studied in France, Italy and Spain. He subsequently became a freelance designer and specialised in printed designs. His designs included a symbol and publicity for the Scottish Council of Industrial Design and for the Scottish Council (Development and Industry). At the time of designing the stamp he was specialising in portrait painting and was on the teaching staff of the Edinburgh College of Art.

STAMPED STATIONERY

On 25 July 1956 a letter appeared in 'The Scotsman' commenting that no mention had been made regarding the embossed stamp on registered envelopes in the announcement on the new stamps. As this stamp was purely English in design, being the Queen's head set in a

frame of Tudor rose, it was suggested special designs were most essential. During September 1956 the DPS started to draft a letter for the PMG setting out the current position on stamped stationery, suggesting that as a result of the decision to issue regional stamps in the 2½d denomination the subsidiary question is raised of whether the embossed 2½d stamp on the ordinary envelopes and the surface printed 2½d stamp on the letter-card should be changed. It was acknowledged that there had been one or two suggestions in the Scottish press calling for this change, but nothing that was considered strong pressure.

In January 1955 the Secretary of the Scottish National Congress wrote to Postal Headquarters, London and to the Director of the Post Office in Scotland sending a resolution that had been passed at one of the Congress's meetings which stated that 'the postal stationery is an insult to Scotland, because all the envelopes bear stamps in the shape of an English rose, a symbol which is distasteful to the other parts of the United Kingdom' and called for an immediate withdrawal of these stamps and postal stationery in Scotland, replaced with new designs acceptable to Scottish opinion.

The Congress had been told that no changes were contemplated. However, recently the PMG had decided that the Royal cypher 'EIIR' be dropped from the watermark. It was thought this would go some way to meeting the wishes of the Congress. It was added that the design on the letter-card did not contain any symbols and was therefore not identifiable with any part of the United Kingdom.

The DPS approached the Supplies Department for its views on changing the postal stationery: the reply was there would be no difficulty in obtaining, handling, storing or despatching any of these items should they be introduced on a regional basis, and that the additional costs involved were likely to be negligible. The Supplies Department advised that supplies of each item could be available for issue within about three weeks of receipt of the approved dies.

The DPS included in the draft that the embossed stamp on the ordinary envelope was also used on the registered envelopes. The design had been introduced in November 1954 and was much admired. The DPS acknowledged that it did incorporate the English (Tudor) rose but he doubted if the average Scotsman would find this objectionable. He felt the GPO had gone a long way in appeasing Scottish sentiment with the Regional stamps and to change the embossed stamp would upset more people than it pleased.

The draft letter was circulated around the Postal Service Department for comments. It transpired that the PMG had not requested to be minuted on the matter and a consensus felt it was best to 'let sleeping dogs lie for the present'. No action was taken and the letter remained dormant in the files.

Two years later, on 31 July 1958, a memo was circulated in PSD advising that the Scottish Office considered the nationalist feeling in Scotland to be 'quiescent at present'. The matter of 'regional' stamped stationery was therefore dropped.

On 14 January 1960, and again on 23 February 1961, Tom Oswald MP wrote to the PMG, Reginald Bevins, regarding the issue of Scottish stamps in book form. On both occasions it was explained that books for Scotland could not be produced without producing books for Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, all having their own 3d stamps. The complexity of stocking and distributing seven varieties of each of the stamp books rendered the idea impracticable.

PHOSPHOR BANDS, QUANTITIES SOLD AND NEW VALUES

Because of the installation of an Automatic Letter Facing machine in Glasgow, Scotland became the first of the Regions where stamps were sold with phosphor bands. The 3d, 6d and 1s 3d stamps, printed with phosphor bands, went on sale in the Glasgow area on 29 January 1963. Initially Glasgow Head Office sold only the phosphor treated stamps, and all other offices sold the ordinary stamps until stocks were exhausted.

The 3d was sold out on 13 March 1968, having sold 1,487,481,480.

On 7 February 1966 a new 4d stamp was issued in ultramarine, having 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 new stamps posted in the specially provided posting boxes at Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The design of the slogan was an envelope with the words 'First Day of Issue'.

On 4 September 1968 new 4d and 5d stamps were issued. Again with the same design as the 1958 3d, the 4d was now olive sepia and the 5d was royal blue. Neither had watermarks.

An official cover was available at a cost of 6d which could be bought 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 Scotland. Philatelic posting boxes were provided at Aberdeen, Ayr, Dumfries, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Paisley and Perth. Again these stamps were only available from post offices in Scotland and at the Philatelic Bureau and all the philatelic counters.

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 new red 4d stamps were on sale in all post offices in Scotland, the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh and all philatelic counters.

The 6d, with no colour changes, was sold out in October 1968 with the quantity sold being 26,758,320.

Stamps at 9d and 1s 6d were issued on 1 March 1967 following postage rate changes. The designs were the same as the 6d and 1s 3d, stocks of which were allowed to run down. The 9d was bronze-green and the 1s 6d was grey-blue. The Post Office provided a first day cover service with a specially designed envelope. Philatelic posting boxes were provided at Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Dumfries, Inverness and Paisley.

Andy Pendlebury
February 1996

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- Post 122/412
- Post 122/413

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- PB 140B issued 31 July 1958
- PB 17 issued 25 January 1963
- PB9 issued 12 January 1966
- PB14 issued 19 January 1967
- PB35 issued 14 February 1967
- PB3 issued 2 January 1969
- PB18 16 January 1969