

STAMP DEFINITIVES

THE FIRST WALES & MONMOUTHSHIRE REGIONAL STAMPS

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On 18 July 1956 the Postmaster General (PMG), Dr Charles Hill, was asked in Parliament whether consideration had been given to issuing distinctive stamps for different parts of the United Kingdom. In reply he outlined the proposals informally approved by the Queen on 7 July for the GPO to issue 2½d, 4d and 1s 3d values for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and 2½d for Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. He explained that the size, basic design and colour of the stamps would not change; the Queen's head would remain the dominant feature but the borders of each stamp would contain symbols or designs appropriate to the country or area concerned, in place of those on the United Kingdom permanent issue. This 'would symbolise the unity, combined with diversity, which provides the continuing strength of the British tradition'. It was intended that committees 'representative of cultural and artistic interests in the countries and islands concerned' be set up to advise on the design of the stamps. The announcement was not universally welcomed; for example, Viscount Elibank wrote in a letter to 'The Daily Telegraph' of 31 July that stamps with Welsh symbols would be 'foisted' on the English border counties of Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire.

THE MONMOUTHSHIRE PROBLEM

On 23 July S D Sargent, the Deputy Director General (DDG) of the Post Office, wrote to Sir Austin Strutt of the Home Office regarding the matter raised in the provincial press over

whether the stamps for Wales would also be sold in Monmouthshire. The Regional Director for Wales and the Border Counties, F E A Manning, felt that the stamps should supplant the equivalent UK values in Monmouthshire; it was government policy to treat the county as part of Wales in matters such as licensing hours and education, while the PMG had made it clear 'that in each of the territories only the stamp for that territory will be on sale'. If more than one range of stamps was sold in post offices, this would lead to complication at counters and a consequent decline in service to the public, and furthermore, 'if the principle were breached for Monmouthshire it would become more difficult to resist pressure for sales of different varieties of stamps elsewhere'.

In his reply, however, Sir Austin explained that the Home Secretary 'fully appreciates the difficulty of having two sets of stamps, but he thinks it would be a prudent step in Monmouthshire to make both sets of stamps available'. The Home Office had believed that in the areas where regional stamps were to be available, they would be sold side by side with the UK issue. H N Pickering of the Postal Services Department (PSD) was asked to pursue the matter; after discussions in which the Regional Director was involved, a solution was proposed by Mr Birley of the Home Office that one variety should be on sale generally and the other sold only on demand. On 1 August Sargent and R H Locke, the Director of Postal Services (DPS) agreed, as an exception to the normal rule, that:

The stamps with Welsh symbols will normally be sold in Monmouthshire. It is envisaged that stamps of the present design will be available on demand in that county.

It was intended that UK stamps in the relevant values should only remain available at main post offices, not sub-offices; on 21 August, however, Manning warned the DDG that 'real political trouble' would ensue if the UK stamps were not sold at all offices in Monmouthshire. Two days later H W Stotesbury of the Home Office wrote to Sargent that: We have no hesitation in saying, from our experience as a department responsible for Welsh affairs, that a quite disproportionate amount of trouble can be caused by a small matter of this kind.

Somewhat reluctantly, the DDG gave way and promised in a reply on 27 August that UK stamps would remain generally available in the county after the issue of the regional stamps. On 12 November J Currie of the Union of Post Office Workers confirmed to Miss E A Knight of PSD that the union was agreeable provided the arrangement was reviewed after twelve months.

MOVES TO SET UP WELSH COMMITTEE

On 25 July Sargent wrote to Sir Austin Strutt regarding the PMG's proposal that regional committees be created to advise on designs. It was thought these would be similar to the Advisory Panel the function of which was to assist the PMG in selecting United Kingdom stamps. The committees would each have seven or eight people with comparable qualifications to those of the Advisory Panel, and each would suggest symbols suitable to represent the particular area, to nominate artists, and to advise the PMG on designs. The DDG asked if Sir Austin could either suggest nominees for these committees or refer the GPO to 'any representative person or organisations' to help choose suitable nominees. Sargent wrote similarly to Manning, emphasising that 'The first steps, therefore must be to decide the composition of these Committees and then get them together.'

On 1 August the Assistant Postmaster General (APMG), C J M Alport, told Dr Hill that he had spoken to Sir Francis Meynell who, as chairman of the Advisory Panel on stamp design, was alarmed that the regional committees might usurp its functions. Alport and the PMG resolved that the Advisory Panel should continue to deal with UK definitives and commemoratives; it should not be involved with the regional stamps unless, as seemed possible, it was not practicable to convene committees for the 'islands', Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. As for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it would be inappropriate to allow the Panel have the final say in design selection, and should not therefore play a formal part, although it might be desirable to consult with Sir Francis informally. It was thought important to maintain the same relationship as with the Panel, by asking the committees to submit two or three designs each, from which the PMG would make a final choice for each region.

On 7 August Manning's deputy, C A Blackmore, replied to the DDG's letter of 25 July, with ideas for a 'cultural committee' to advise on the proposed Welsh stamps. He suggested Gilbert Shepherd, who had been a member of the Post Office Advisory Council since 1934 and lived in Cardiff, plus any other Council members resident in Wales, and thought the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire might also be asked to nominate a representative. The latter body had been set up in 1949; its 27 members included representatives of local government (twelve), industrial management and labour (four each), the University of Wales and Joint Education Board for Wales and Monmouthshire (one each), the Welsh Tourist Board and National Eisteddfod Council (one each) and three appointees of the Prime Minister. Its functions were to exchange views and information on economic and cultural developments and to keep the Government informed about the general impact of its policies on Welsh life.

Blackmore also proposed 'experts in Art', deliberately drawn from west and north Wales as well as the south to avoid any accusation of the GPO favouring the latter: Frank Roper ARCA,

Vice Principal, Cardiff College of Art; Robert Lambert Gapper BSc, ARCA, Senior Lecturer in Art, Aberystwyth University College; Frederick Lees, Curator and Secretary of the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art, Conway, North Wales. Another list of suggestions was sent by Sir Austin Strutt at the Home Office on 28 August, comprising: Lord Kenyon, President of both the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and of the National Museum of Wales; Dr T Alwyn Lloyd FRIBA, Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales and Honorary Lecturer at the Welsh School of Architecture; the Marquess of Anglesey, a member of both the Arts Council's Welsh Committee and the Historic Buildings Council for Wales; Ceri Richards, a painter resident in London; David Bell ARCA, Curator, Swansea Art Galleries. Sir Austin added that the Arts Council might put further names forward after consulting its Welsh Committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AGREED

The DDG and Sir Austin Strutt discussed the nominees on 30 August and decided that Roper, Gapper and Lees (suggested by the Regional Director) plus Lord Kenyon, Dr Lloyd, Lord Anglesey, and Bell (as suggested by Sir Austin) be suggested to both the PMG and Home Secretary. It was also proposed that the list should include a representative of the Council for Wales; Ceri Richards was omitted, as it had been decided that none of the Committees should include those who were artists. A few days later the Regional Director advised the Secretary of the Council for Wales that the committee would not meet until October, and suggested that the Chairman of the Council, Alderman Huw T Edwards, be invited *ex officio*. This proposal was adopted and invitations sent to all eight nominees on 11 September. The sole refusal came from Lees of the Royal Cambrian Academy on the grounds of ill health; he suggested H P Huggill ARE, President of the Academy and a Governor of the National Museum of Wales, was willing to serve. Sir Austin opposed this, expressed in a letter to the DPS on 13 October, stating that the Academy's connection with Welsh art was 'somewhat tenuous: it is mainly a Merseyside organisation which has an annual exhibition in Conway', and advised that it was unnecessary to find a replacement for Lees, as North Welsh interests were already represented on the Committee.

Sir Austin confirmed to R H Locke, the Director of Postal Services (DPS), on 4 September, that the Home Secretary had approved the nominees as it stood (with Lees in place of Huggill, and without Edwards). He added that the GPO 'would have to keep in mind the importance of having the words Postage Revenue in Welsh on the stamps ... It would never do to have a Welsh stamp with English wording'. He had already mentioned this to the DDG, and the Home Secretary had made a point of asking whether the matter had been brought to the PMG's attention. When approached the Regional Director did not comment on the question of using Welsh on the stamps; however, the Home Office's proposal caused Locke some anxiety, and he wrote in a memorandum on 6 September:

If we have any words on the 'national' stamps in other than English ... we shall risk other countries being in doubt as to the country of origin of the stamps and they might then well press the issue of having [it] ... printed on our stamps ... At present the Queen's head is tacitly accepted as signifying the name of the country, but with what would appear to be a 'foreign' language incorporated in the stamp this privilege might be seriously challenged.

In a note to the DDG on 22 September Locke explained the Welsh language problem further; the word 'postage' could not be avoided, as it felt incumbent on Britain to implement the UPU recommendation that all stamps should include the word, while the Board of Inland Revenue felt that wherever 'postage' was used, 'revenue' should also appear. It was therefore necessary to include 'postage' and 'revenue', and the language issue raised by the Home Office had therefore to be cleared. The DPS reiterated the objections to Welsh, adding:

The issue of a special series of stamps with Welsh emblems in itself goes a long way towards satisfying national sentiment, and I do not consider that we should be justified, in view of the risks involved, in going further ... I consider that all the Regional stamps, which will in fact constitute an integral part of our basic stamp issue, should bear in English the words 'Postage' and 'Revenue'.

He believed the regional Committees might wish to omit the words to allow more space for 'local symbols and motifs', but wished to take a firm stand that 'regional stamps are not commemorative stamps in which we tend to allow some latitude'.

In discussions held on 13 September and subsequently, the DPS and Manning agreed to maintain the PMG's stipulations that the stamps be of the same size, colour and basic design as the existing 2½d, 4d and 1s 3d definitives. The policy decisions on the availability of stamps in Monmouthshire were noted. Points agreed in addition were: that the design should not include the name of the country; there should be different designs for each value; the number of artists invited should not exceed three or four; the stamps would continue to be printed by photogravure.

On 3 November the DDG advised Alport, the APMG, that all places on the Welsh Committee were filled, except that the Home Office opposed the replacement of Lees by Huggill. He passed on Locke's recommendations against the use of Welsh on the stamps and favoured the policy regarding Monmouthshire. The APMG replied on 5 November, generally agreeing the recommendations from the DPS and Manning; with regard to the composition of the Committee, however, Alport felt it unnecessarily discourteous to reject Huggill, whose offer of service was duly accepted. The Committee was advised to the press and Parliament on 9 November; on 19 November the DDG wrote to Sir Austin Strutt at the Home Office confirming the decisions on the Welsh stamps that had been reached.

FIRST DELIBERATIONS BY COMMITTEE

On 22 November Miss Knight of PSD wrote to the Regional Director that various approaches had been received from artists wishing to work on designs for the Welsh issue - these included R Buckle and L Thornton (neither Welsh) and Miss Myra Evans Lenton of Abercwmboi, Glamorgan. The name of A Kitson Towler of Cardiff, a Doctor of Fine Arts, had also been put forward. Thornton was a former staff artist for the stamp printers Harrison and Sons, and had contributed numerous designs in the past, none of which had been used. Buckle said that he had executed an illuminated address for the Queen at the time of her Coronation which she had accepted - the Council of Industrial Design (CoID) was asked if it knew about him but the answer was no.

The Welsh Committee held its first meeting in Cardiff on 20 December, at which it was shown original artwork by Farrar-Bell and Mary Adshead for the current low value definitive issue, to suggest what was required. On 2 January 1957 the Chairman, Dr Lloyd, reported to Manning that the following recommendations should be forwarded to the PMG: The dominant feature of the new stamps should be the Queen's head, but artists should be advised that the head may be reduced slightly in size from that now existing on the present 2½d value stamp, in order to allow more space for Welsh symbols in the border. The principal emblem should be the Welsh Dragon, and the Leek in flower should be incorporated in the design. Special consideration should be given to the lettering. Artists to be informed that they may submit single or separate designs for the 2½d, 4d and 1s 3d stamps but with no variation of the symbols used.

The Committee wished to invite the following artists: R L Gapper, V S James, H Martin, C Tunnicliffe RA, Mary Adshead and Reynolds Stone; Manning thought this a rather large number, but the Committee pressed the point. Dr Lloyd asked whether stamps could be issued in the 2d and 1s 6d denominations, 'in view of the extensive use of these values of stamps on postcards and Christmas mail, and air mail correspondence to Australasia'. In a letter to the PMG the following day Manning assumed this request was 'to keep Wales in the public eye by every possible means because of its resources as a tourist centre'.

As well as being an artist selected Gapper was a member of the Committee; the GPO wished to avoid having artists serving, let alone any who would actually be submitting designs. No issue was made of the point, however, and it was simply arranged for Gapper to withdraw from meetings whenever designs were being considered.

COMMITTEE PROPOSALS ACCEPTED

On 8 January Locke recommended to the APMG that the Committee's suggestions be adopted, except extending the range of values - if done for Wales it would also have to apply to Scotland and Northern Ireland, and hence the proposal was not pursued. Another enquiry was received from the Committee, reportedly originating with Gapper, as to whether the stamps could be in horizontal rather than vertical - this was also refused. The DPS wrote on 9 January to Sir Gordon Russell at the CoID, listing more artists who had independently offered to design regional stamps - the list now included the well-known heraldic designer William M Gardner and N A Bowker, about whom nothing was known. Sir Gordon replied on 16 January that Gardner's offer might usefully be taken up, but Thornton's earlier work had not been 'of the quality desired' by the CoID; he warned against using too many designers or non-professionals as this had never yielded good results in the past. Gardner was invited to submit designs for the Jersey stamps, and no change was made to the panel of artists suggested by the Welsh Committee; it was accepted that Mary Adshead and Reynolds Stone were experienced and reputable designers against whom the only possible objection was that, unlike the other four artists on the panel, they had no known Welsh connection.

The same day, 16 January, Dr Lloyd wrote to Manning qualifying his remarks that 'special consideration' be given to lettering as meaning, in essence, that it was a feature of the design to which artists should not give less importance than other elements. He wrote again on 21 January suggesting that extra space could be created by replacing 'postage' and 'revenue' with the word 'post', which had the advantage of meaning the same in English and Welsh; he was also informed by Committee member David Bell that there was an excellent illustration of the Red Dragon of Wales, striking the 'passant' pose prescribed by heraldry, in 'A Complete Guide to Heraldry' by A C Fox Davies, published in 1950.

Dr Lloyd reported that Bell was also assisting with researches into the Leek, and on 23 January wrote to Manning with their findings on the vegetable - according to botanists, the traditional emblematic leek of Wales was the cultivated variety which never usually flowered, while the rare and wild flowering variety that the Committee had had in mind as a symbol would probably not be recognised for what it was. He therefore suggested that the instructions to artists should refer to the 'common' leek rather than the leek 'in flower'.

Dr Lloyd's information was forwarded to the DPS by the Regional Director's office; Locke referred to Dr Lloyd's suggestion of 21 January in a memorandum to the DDG on 31 January. He urged they maintain the former position against the use of Welsh on the stamps, reminding him that the use of Norman French on the Jersey stamps had also been forbidden. Sargent agreed, noting on 4 February that 'the general aim is to have these Regional stamps as like as possible to the ordinary UK stamps'. In a letter to Manning on 6

February the DPS reiterated the arguments against using the Welsh 'post' in place of 'postage', adding that the latter word was used on stamps throughout the Commonwealth and in the USA.

ARTISTS' GUIDELINES ISSUED

The 'Instructions to Artists' had been in preparation since the beginning of January, and on 19 February Locke wrote to Manning enclosing copies to send to the artists concerned. Dr Lloyd confirmed on 21 February that there was no objection to these, and the invitations were sent out the following day. The instructions gave artists the basic guidelines as to values, colour and design, ie, that the stamps should be distinguishable from UK definitives chiefly by designs in the border; other points covered were as follows:

The Queen's head should not be proportionately larger than in the 2½d definitive or smaller than in the ½d definitive; it could be relocated on either a vertical or diagonal axis within the design provided it remained the dominant feature.

The border designs must be symbolic in nature and pictorial treatment would not be admitted. The symbols in the borders were to be the sole features representing Wales and their treatment was 'of paramount importance'; the common leek should be included but the principal emblem was to be the Welsh dragon shown passant (artists were referred to Fox Davies' book on heraldry for a suitable illustration).

The artists could use lettering of their choice for 'postage' and 'revenue' or omit the words from designs at their own discretion.

The value should preferably be in clear Arabic numerals, but lettering, or a combination of letters and figures, would be considered.

Rough sketches should be submitted four times stamp size excluding gutter and perforations, that is 3.44 inches down by 2.84 inches across; sepia-grey wash tones should be used to facilitate photogravure reproduction. Each artist was supplied with a 'shade card' for guidance, plus a photograph of the Queen's head as approved for postage stamps and a set of low value definitives showing the five different designs in current use. It was stressed that the purpose of these was to indicate the permissible variations in size of the effigy; artists should not be unduly influenced by the style of these but, it was hoped, 'bring a fresh angle' to the stamp designs. The deadline for the rough sketches was 1 April, and artists would be asked subsequently to complete those considered of sufficient merit. A final selection would be made from the completed drawings. The payment for rough drawings was 20 guineas (£21) each up to a maximum of 40 guineas (£42) per artist (although artists were encouraged to submit a minimum of three different designs). A further 20 guineas would be paid subsequently for each completed drawing, and 160 guineas (£168) for each design used as a stamp.

LISTING OF ARTWORK

On 18 April the DPS sent Manning 25 pieces of artwork that had been received for the Welsh stamps, together with 8 sheets of bromides of the drawings for use by the Committee. It was hoped that it could choose between five and ten drawings for completion, from which about five would be submitted to the Queen and from which she would make the final selection of three designs. To avoid any possible favouritism on the part of the Committee, the artists' names had been removed or obliterated from the original drawings, which were identified by numbers. Technical comments on the drawings and a key listing of the numbers were also enclosed for Manning's information, as follows:

C F Tunnicliffe: 4d (1), 1s 3d (2), 2½d(3)

Mary Adshead: 4d (4), 1s 3d (5), 4d (6), 4d (7), 2½d (8)

V S James: 2½d (9), 4d (10), 4d (11*), 1s 3d (12)

Reynolds Stone: 4d (13), 4d (14), 2½d (15), 4d (16), ½d (17)

H Martin: 2½d (18), 4d (19)

R L Gapper: 2½d (20), 2½d (21), 2½d (22), 2½d (24), 2½d (25**).

* The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) has two versions of this design with slight differences of shading.

** Gapper explained that this design, which incorporated details of hands on a half-drawn sword and a dove, symbolised the ceremonial call for Peace at the annual Eisteddfod.

Comments:

'Postage' and 'Revenue' did not appear on 1 and 17 [the words appear on the artwork of 17 held in the BPMA but not on the bromide].

The value figures on 9 and 12 were 'on the small side'.

The '½d' value figure on 17 would have to be changed.

18 showed the Tudor crown above the Queen's head, not St Edward's Crown as now used; it was not 'a very happy arrangement' in any case to show the crown, as the Queen was already wearing a coronet; the Queen's head was below the minimum acceptable size. The Queen's head was insufficiently dominant in several designs, particularly 1, 2, 3, 8, 18 and 20.

1, 2 and 3 contained too much decoration altogether.

23 tended too much towards the 'pictorial'.

In a letter to Miss Knight on 19 April, Mary Adshead criticised three of her drawings as follows after seeing the bromides:

No. 1 design [listed as no. 4]

The ribbon is not quite semi-circular, the outline of the leeks needs straightening, and the crown needs to be touched up to show more lights and shadows.

No. 2 [listed as no. 5]

The crown needs to be picked out in highlights.

The Queen's head is cut off too sharply, and needs to show more neck and shoulders, and a strip of the neckline of her dress, with shadow below.

Postage Revenue could be slightly enlarged, and so could the draped motif at the top.

No. 3 [listed as no. 6]

The leeks around the oval should have a stronger outline and the neck and shoulders should go down to the bottom of the oval behind the leeks.

DESIGNS CHOSEN FOR COMPLETION

The Welsh Committee on 6 May examined the designs, and chose seven for completion. In a letter to Manning on 13 May Dr Lloyd listed the chosen seven with accompanying remarks:

Design 5.

(i) In the Queen's portrait, the neck and shoulder to be curtailed so that the dragons are not obscured.

(ii) The denomination at each side of the Queen's head to be in 'Perpetua' type lettering, and slightly reduced in size.

Design 10.

On the Queen's portrait, the neck to be curtailed to allow more space for the dragon's wings, which should not be so flat.

Design 13.

(i) The leek in the lower left corner to be omitted and replaced by another '4d'.

(ii) The artist to be asked to consider using the same type of '4d' as in design 14.

Design 14.

No changes required.

Design 15.

On the Queen's head, a small amount of background to show above the Coronet, by reducing the size of the bust.

Design 16.

No changes required.

Design 19.

No changes required.

The DPS was notified on 15 May, and commented that the various proposals to 'curtail' or 'reduce' the Queen's head 'will need careful handling'. Shortly afterwards Mr Coulton of Harrison's was asked for further technical comment on the chosen designs:

Drawing 5

The lettering of 'Postage' and 'Revenue' needs to be tidied. It would be necessary to 'pick out' the highlights on the Queen's tiara and to lighten the tone round the Queen's neck and chin if the portrait of the Queen was to stand out sufficiently clearly from the background.

Drawing 10

The method of drawing was unsatisfactory and the artist would need to redraw the design directly on to the dark background. The motif between 'Postage' and 'Revenue' at the top of the design should be made more definite or alternatively removed and replaced by a dash. The split in the vertical stroke of the '4' would not print satisfactorily.

Drawing 13

No comment.

Drawing 14

The vertical and horizontal lines dividing the design into sections were rather thin: they should either be omitted or thickened. The sketched scales on the middle of the back of the dragon should be omitted and replaced by a shaded colour wash. (The scales cannot be seen at all on the bromide.)

Drawing 15

The vertical and horizontal designs dividing the design into sections were too thin and should either be omitted or thickened.

Drawing 16

The thin lines in the lettering were too weak and should be strengthened. The tone of the background should be strengthened behind 'Postage' and 'Revenue' or alternatively the size of 'Postage' and 'Revenue' should be slightly reduced and a border included in the design.

Drawing 19

The lettering should be strengthened. The treatment of the dragon was too vague and a more defined drawing of it would be necessary for satisfactory printing.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO APMG

On 4 June Sargent sent the copies of the seven designs to the APMG (since 18 January, Kenneth Thompson) together with a summary of the changes recommended by the Committee, PSD and Coulton. A number of recommendations were put to Thompson: Mary Adshead to be asked to complete two versions of design 5, one with the Queen's neck and shoulder 'curtailed' to make room for the dragons as suggested by the Committee, and one with more neck and shoulder and improved shading, combining suggestions by herself and the printers; the values in each to be put into 'Perpetua' lettering and reduced in size, the lettering of 'postage revenue' made slightly larger, and the highlights of the Queen's crown enhanced.

V S James to be asked to show more of the Queen's neck and corsage on the left and less on the right hand side of the portrait in design 10; the line of the base of the neck to be redrawn 'in an elegant curve' as in Martin's design 19, and matched by the outline of the dragon's wings. The head should be raised slightly within the design, and the motif at top centre amended as necessary in doing so.

In addition to the Committee's advice on design 13, Reynolds Stone to prepare additional oval value tabs with dark lettering on a light background. On designs 14 and 15 to either thicken or omit the lines dividing the design into vertical and horizontal sections, as advised by the printers and subject to the further views of the Committee; the head should be lowered within design 15 to show more background behind the crown. On design 16 to strengthen the lettering; also either strengthen the tones behind the lettering or add a border around the design.

On design 19 H Martin to strengthen the lettering slightly and produce a finished drawing of the dragon.

The APMG replied on 6 June agreeing with the selections and suggested improvements, although commenting in a memorandum to the DDG: 'Frankly, I think these are pretty poor specimens' - a view with which Sargent expressed some sympathy. In a note to Thompson on 12 June he said that he had contemplated seeking one or two fresh designs, but decided that, as it had not been necessary to do this in the case of any other region, it would be invidious to do it only for the Welsh stamps. 'It is of the essence of these national stamps that they should be the free choice (within our general requirements) of the national committees concerned.'

It was the DDG's intention that Sir Francis Meynell offer his comments on the designs - a convenient opportunity did not arise until 9 August when Sir Francis saw the seven preliminary drawings at a meeting with Sargent, Miss Knight, and A Wolstencroft of PSD. He

agreed with Sargent that the designs were ‘the weakest of all the regional stamps’. He thought design 5 ‘very badly drawn’, design 13 ‘a dreadful design’, and design 19 ‘very anaemic’; however, design 10 was ‘very pleasing’ and design 14 was ‘thought tolerable’. Design 15 was agreed to be so similar to 14 ‘that it was not worth considering as an alternative’. He made additional comments as follows:

Design 5 was reluctantly conceded by Sir Francis to have ‘possibilities’; however, the ‘1/3’ was too large and should be put in once only, at bottom left above ‘postage’.

On design 10, Sir Francis agreed with the comment of Coulton that the split in the ‘4d’ was undesirable and would not print well.

On design 14 the Queen’s head should be moved slightly to the right; also the frame as it was drawn seemed incomplete, and it was agreed the lines should be omitted.

On design 16 the denomination should be larger in size; Sir Francis also criticised the lettering and proposed that the ‘o’ of ‘postage revenue’ should be ‘less fat’ and the ‘e’ wider.

NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO ARTISTS

On 15 August Pickering of PSD wrote to Manning that the Committee’s selections were agreed, and further instructions to the artists concerned were attached for approval; these incorporated proposals by PSD and the printers as well as changes first suggested by the Committee. He also explained that the Welsh stamps were now to be issued in 3d, 6d and 1s 3d values as a result of the tariff increase due on 1 October; revised value tabs were thus among the changes requested in the new instructions.

The list of ‘further instructions to artists’, slightly modified by the Committee as reported by Manning on 23 August, can be summarised as follows:

Design 5 (Mary Adshead)

The value should be redrawn in ‘Perpetua’ and reduced in size.

‘Postage’ and ‘revenue’ should be slightly enlarged.

Three versions should be completed: (a) with the Queen’s neck and shoulders curtailed so as not to obscure the dragons; (b) showing more of the neck and shoulders, with a shadow cast below; Queen’s coronet highlighted out against leek-and-dragon motif of ‘curtain’ or ‘tapestry’ backcloth; (c) with value shown at bottom left only, immediately above ‘postage’.

Design 10 (V S James)

Design to be redrawn directly on to dark background.

The neckline of the head should be modified to show more corsage on the left and less on the right; the line at the base of the neck and the dragon’s wings below it should be redrawn to follow the same elegant curve; the head should be raised within the design to accomplish this if necessary.

Design 13 (Reynolds Stone)

A second value tab (the first being that at bottom right) should replace the leek at lower left. [The effect of this was to remove leeks from the design altogether; Manning criticised this, but was reminded by Miss Knight that the Committee had suggested this change the previous May.]

Alternative tabs to be prepared showing value in dark lettering on a light background within an oval frame.

Design 14 (Reynolds Stone)

The vertical and horizontal lines dividing the design into sections should be deleted. The scales in the middle of the dragon's back should be replaced by a shaded colour wash. The Queen's head should be moved slightly to the right.

Design 15 (Reynolds Stone)

The vertical and horizontal lines dividing the design into sections should be thickened. The Queen's head should be lowered slightly within the design to display a small amount of background above the coronet.

Design 16 (Reynolds Stone)

The value should be slightly larger than the 4d in the original drawing. A frame should be put around the whole design to offset the lightness of tone behind 'postage' and 'revenue'. Thin lines in the lettering should be strengthened and the letters made more regular in width - in particular, 'e' should be wider and 'o' less wide.

Design 19 (H Martin)

The finished drawing of the dragon should be executed more boldly. The lettering should be strengthened.

The instructions also incorporated requests for revised and additional value tabs.

On 30 August the new instructions went out to Adshead, James, Stone and Martin; at the same time each, plus Gapper and Tunnicliffe, was paid 40 guineas (£42) for their preliminary drawings. Miss Knight recorded in a memorandum of 14 September that Sir George Bellew of the College of Arms had been consulted about the use of the letters 'ER' on regional stamps; Sir George said little pertinent to the Welsh stamps beyond that the two letters could correctly appear either separately or joined together as a monogram, although he personally thought it undesirable to feature them other than in the form of the Royal cipher, 'E II R', surmounted by a crown. Only one design, H Martin's 19, included the letters.

COMPLETED DESIGNS RETURNED

Reynolds Stone's amended designs were returned on 9 September; however, it was noticed he had added flowers to the leek on design 14 and he was asked to restore it to its original state (it emerged that the change was inspired by Stone's noticing the flowering leeks in his own garden). He was also asked to separate the bottom serifs of the 'r' and 'e' in 'revenue', and to remove a white smudge from between the dragon's feet on design 16. Stone remarked that he now regretted placing the values on designs 15 and 16 so close to the Queen's head to make more room for his dragons - this does not, however, seem to have presented a problem to those who examined the designs. All designs were finally returned by the end of September, except for the four variants of design 5 by Mary Adshead: these were returned on 1 October with an apology that she had been let down by her letterer. She also commented that she had replaced the dark band formerly at the foot of the design by fading the background into the darker shade, and that she now thought the values, which she had reduced in size as requested, too small. She had produced two versions of the value - one with the figures in black that she personally preferred, and one in black with a white outline.

On 1 October S Robson of the Supplies Department wrote to H A Berry of Harrisons enclosing designs 10, 13, 14 15, 16 and 19, and requesting stamp size bromides showing the new values - two versions of design 13 were requested, one with the value in light colour on a dark background as on the original, and one with a value tab showing the '6d' in dark colour on a light background. These were supplied on 7 October; Mary Adshead's variants of design 5 were forwarded the same day for further bromides to be prepared. It was explained that these were to be distinguished as follows:

5A - Two value tabs as on design with black value figures.

5B - Two value tabs with black figuring with white outline.

5C - One value tab at bottom left with black figures.

5D - One value tab at bottom left with black figuring with white outline.

Harrisons was also asked for technical comments on the suitability of the designs for reproduction; H A Berry wrote on behalf of the company on 7 October that designs 13 to 16 and 19 'would require re-drawing to a finished standard', and on 9 October that Mary Adshead's designs 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D 'appear to be rather rough' and needed 'to have a considerable amount of work done to them and perhaps be re-drawn before they could be considered suitable'. The bromides of Mary Adshead's designs were returned on 11 October. On 15 November the APMG visited Cardiff to attend a meeting of the Welsh Committee at which the new bromides were examined.

BRIEFING FOR APMG

The bromides included four variants of Mary Adshead's design 5, and also two of Reynolds Stone's 13; the APMG's briefing notes, drawn up by Miss E A Knight and approved by the DDG, explained these as follows:

Mary Adshead

5A - 'curtailed' or smaller Queen's head; all-black values parallel with head at left and right.

5B - larger head with 'highlighted' coronet, more neck and shoulders, and shadow; values black-on-white, placed as on 5A.

5C - head as 5B; all-black value at bottom left only.

5D - head as 5B; black-on-white value, placed as on 5C.

Reynolds Stone

13A - values light on dark background at bottom left and right.

13B - values dark on light background within oval frames, placed as on 13A.

In other respects these and the remaining designs were largely as agreed by the Committee, the Regional Director and personnel at GPO Headquarters at the end of August. Berry's advice on those designs still needing work was also incorporated in Miss Knight's briefing notes, while further comment on the designs included the following:

Design 5 - the all-black version of the values was preferred; on 5A, 'it may be felt that the Queen's Head is not sufficiently dominant'.

Design 10 - 'we think that the values could perhaps be drawn a trifle larger and placed further into the corners'.

Design 13 - 'we do not feel that the design is at all a successful one'.

Design 15 - 'we do not feel this design is particularly successful'.

Design 16 - the artist had incorporated both suggestions (strengthening the tone and framing the design) previously offered as alternatives; however, 'it is in fact only a variation of design no.15; it is also not unlike design No. 14. All three designs ... could be regarded as three versions of the same basic idea; of the three, we prefer no. 14'.

Design 19 - 'the design is not particularly impressive and rather similar to design no. 10'.

It was hoped the Committee would choose at least four designs, namely 'one for each denomination and at least one reserve'. These would be essayed in colour and shown to the Committee, with the hope that no further changes would be called for. Once approved by the Queen it was hoped to issue the stamps about May or June 1958. Miss Knight also wrote to Manning in preparation for the meeting of 15 November, informing him that the colour of the stamps would be violet for the 3d, purple for the 6d, and green for the 1s 3d. Although value tabs had been prepared so that any of the values could be allocated to any of the designs, she warned that if a dark design such as 14 were chosen for the 6d, the general appearance would be very different from that of the UK issue of that value. It was also

important to avoid a design for the 1s 3d that might be confused with that of the UK 1½d, as the two values were very similar in colour – ‘for this reason there is much to be said for a version of no. 5 for the 1/3 value’.

DESIGNS CHOSEN FOR ESSAYING

On 15 November the Committee selected five designs for colour essaying. These, together with suggested changes for consideration by the artists concerned, were listed by Dr Lloyd in a letter to the Regional Director on 19 November:

10. This design should be used for the 3d stamp. The artist should be asked (i) to move the 3d in the left top corner out into line with the leek to balance the other 3d and (ii) to bring the lettering ‘POST’ and ‘ENUE’ around the portrait of the Queen into a more semi-circular form.

13A. This design should be used for the 6d stamp. The artist should be asked to make the lettering a little more distinctive in order to ensure clear reproduction on the stamp.

14. This design should be used for the 1s 3d stamp. The artist should be requested to disentangle the dragon’s claw from the denomination symbol.

13B. This design is chosen as a reserve stamp for any of the three denominations. The Committee’s comments concerning Drawing No. 13A apply equally to this design.

15. This design is chosen as a reserve stamp for any of the three denominations. The artist should be asked to omit the leeks from this design.

There was some disappointment that the Committee had not chosen design 5 - in a note to Sargent on 10 December, Wolstencroft indicated that PSD’s preference was for a further version of the design to be called no. 5E, which was basically ‘No. 5C with the denomination shown twice and moved up a little’. The DDG discussed the designs with Sir George Bellew on 17 December; Sir George was critical, on aesthetic rather than heraldic grounds. Sargent took the advice of the DPS and wrote the following day to the PMG (Ernest Marples, who had replaced Dr Charles Hill the previous January) recommending that the Committee’s selection be essayed as requested. However, he agreed that the general quality of the Welsh designs remained a cause for concern, and that the choice of no. 13, ‘one of the less happy designs’, was all the more disappointing when no. 5, ‘one of the better designs’, was not even selected as a reserve; he added his opinion, and that of PSD, that no. 13B was ‘scarcely justified’ as a reserve, since it was nearly identical to no. 13A. He proposed that a colour essay should be made of no. 5C rather than any further variant of no. 5, as a reserve

for any denomination in addition to nos 13B and 15. This was agreed by the APMG on 19 December, and by Marples on 20 December.

On 3 January 1958, the artists were asked to make modifications to their final designs as requested by Dr Lloyd on behalf of the Committee on 19 November. Miss Knight also wrote to Harrisons explaining that all three artists had been asked to collaborate with them as necessary over the finishing of their designs, although in Adshead's case this amounted only to a 'general cleaning up of the drawing to make it suitable for reproduction'. The letter sent to Reynolds Stone amplified the Committee's request for 'more distinctive' lettering; it was explained to that certain of the letters, especially the 'N' on nos 13A and 13B appeared bigger than others. The printer was asked to supply the following essays once finalised drawings were available:

5C (1s 3d reserve): six each violet, lighter purple, and green

10 (3d first choice): six violet

13A (6d first choice): six purple, six lighter purple

13B (6d reserve): six each violet, purple and green

14 (1s 3d first choice): six green

15 (3d reserve): six each violet, purple and green.

The use of lighter purple on essays of 13A was intended to achieve the same overall effect of tone as on the 6d of the UK definitive; Miss Knight explained:

We are anxious that our stamps should recognise these new stamps easily - and of course the best means of telling the value of a stamp is by its colour. We feel that some of the designs the Committee have chosen for the 6d value are likely to look rather different from our current 6d stamp; hence our request for a lighter printing.

Harrisons was also asked to 'print the purple version [of 5C] so that the general tone is similar to the current 6d stamp', but it was only on 13A that printing in both full strength and lighter purple ink was requested so that the effect of ordinary and lighter purple could be compared. 13B and 15 were to be printed in ordinary purple ink, which, although the same as that used on the UK definitive, had, as Miss Knight explained, the effect of seeming darker when applied to the new designs.

On 6 January Manning wrote to Miss Knight; following a discussion with Dr Lloyd, he now wished to qualify the request that Reynolds Stone be asked for more 'distinctive lettering' on design 13:

The Committee thought the letters were inclined to look like parts of the design or fruits in the branches and not quite clearly letters making up words. The feeling was that they fill up so completely the spaces between the leaves that they might not even print clearly but smudge slightly into the leaf design. Some of the letters such as the G and E in POSTAGE seem to stand out more distinctly than others.

Dr Lloyd was, however, satisfied with the final instructions to Stone.

FIRST ESSAYS SUPPLIED

On 15 January further payments were made to the four artists who had been asked to complete their preliminary designs: 60 guineas (£63) to Mary Adshead, 80 guineas (£84) to Reynolds Stone, and 20 guineas (£21) each to V S James and H Martin.

Mr Berry of Harrisons replied to Miss Knight on 13 January, explaining that the only amended design now outstanding was 10, which James hoped to supply by 20 January at latest. It was hoped to complete the Welsh essays by 26 February; problems arose subsequently when supplies of a new purple ink were delayed reaching the printers. However, Miss Knight and Berry discussed the problem on 28 February, and on 6 March Miss Knight asked for six essays each in the new colour of designs 5C, 13A, 13B and 15, plus (if the printers thought it advisable) six of 13A in a paler version of the new colour. Berry replied next day promising the essays 'very quickly'; essays reached the Supplies Department on 26 January and were forwarded to PSD the following day.

Miss Knight suggested that 13A or 13B in green should be used for the 1s 3d value rather than 14, and 15 in purple for the 6d rather than 13A - she considered that the essays in these colours were closer in shade to the UK definitives than those of the designs favoured by the Committee. Pickering argued that designs 13A and 14 should simply be transposed - 13A in green as the 1s 3d would be less easily confused with the UK 1½d because of the light background to the head, while 14 in the lighter purple as the 6d would appear 'just as well as No. 15 does and better than No. 13 could'. On 8 April A Wolstencroft, who had replaced Locke as DPS on 1 January, concurred with Pickering's view, and agreed this with the DDG the same day.

When Sargent put the proposals to the APMG, Thompson initially agreed. However, on 17 April Wolstencroft and members of his department met with Supplies and Harrison's representatives to discuss production schedules and issue dates; also addressed were the problems of the similarity of the 1s 3d design 14 to the UK 1½d, and the 6d 13A depth of colour. It was agreed that confusion between the 1s 3d and 1½d of the UK definitives due to the likeness of colour were isolated, although not unknown. The idea of asking for a change in the design of 14 was dropped in favour of pursuing a possible change of colour for the UK 1½d - this also came to nothing.

The colour of the 6d was felt by the DPS to be of more serious concern because of the value's wide use for overseas mail - 'this might have repercussions internationally when

this country started to send four different designs of 6d stamps ... all over the world', which would of course be exacerbated if the four issues - UK, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland - were not of uniform colour. However, B T Coulton of Harrisons pointed out that if revised essays of 13A or any other design were required, it might unavoidably delay issue of the Welsh stamps until after the other Regionals. If no revisions were required preparation of final cylinders could start as soon as work was cleared on the British Empire Games issue. It was decided that the Welsh Committee be asked to accept the designs as they were, and warned of the possible consequences if further change was wanted.

In a meeting with the APMG that day Sargent and the DPS secured agreement that 'difficulties of timetabling' made it necessary to drop the plan of re-essaying 14 in light purple and 13A in green, although there was apparently still time to modify the value on 10. On 21 April Wolstencroft wrote to Manning that the production schedule was very tight and that there could be no more fundamental changes if, as was planned, the 3d was to be issued in August and the other values the following month, simultaneously with the other Regional issues. He conveyed the feeling that the 3d value on the essay of design 10 needed to be strengthened or enlarged, but explained that Harrisons could do this at cylinder stage. The only problem was that, of the Committee's two reserve choices, 13B was thought too similar to 13A - 'we should prefer to have three quite distinct designs for the three denominations and we feel it would be rather a pity if 13B were selected in place of design 10 or 14 if, at the same time, 13A were retained for the 6d value'. He suggested that 13B might be a reserve for 13A only. The DPS enclosed two sheets of bromides and two sets of essays for use at the Committee meeting; these did not include the essays of 5C or those of 13A in light purple.

The Committee met on 25 April and revised its former recommendations as follows:

3d - first choice 13B; second choice 13A

6d - first choice 15; second choice 10

1s 3d - first choice 14; second choice 15 (only if 10 is chosen by the Queen for 6d denomination).

As a result PSD urgently requested fresh essays of 10 and 13A with the colours transposed; Harrisons supplied these on 29 April.

QUEEN APPROVES FINAL SELECTIONS

On 1 May Sargent recommended to the PMG that the Committee's revised allocation of 13B for the 3d, 15 for the 6d and 14 for the 1s 3d be accepted; however, he proposed simply that 10 should be taken as a general reserve and 13A excluded to ensure an adequate distinction between all the designs. Marples wrote to the Queen's Private Secretary, Sir Michael

Adeane, on 7 May, submitting essays 'A' of 13B, 'B' of 15 and 'C' of 14 for the 3d, 6d and 1s 3d values respectively. Essay 'D' of design 10 was included as sole reserve. The three main choice essays were each in the standard colour for the values for which they were proposed, although 'A' was actually inscribed 6d and 'B' as 3d. It was explained that this would be amended subsequently. The PMG was notified on 9 May that 'A', 'B' and 'C' had been approved by the Queen and 'D' rejected. Final payment was made to Reynolds Stone as designer of the stamps, and he received 480 guineas (£504) on 30 June based on 160 guineas for each design.

Harrisons was asked for bromides of all three designs in the correct values on 9 May; while Stone had prepared a 6d value tab for the original of design 'B' (15) in September 1957 he had not been called on to produce a 3d tab for 'A' (13B), and, at PSD's request 'as a matter of urgency', the printers transferred the 3d value from another Stone design. The firm supplied six bromides of each design 15 May; the following day F J Langfield of PSD wrote to Reynolds Stone enclosing one bromide of the design with the interpolated 3d and another featuring the 6d, commenting on the former: 'Apart from the tilted right-hand oval which Messrs Harrison will, in any event, correct, we think the 3, necessarily off-centre to accommodate the D, does not fit so happily into the oval as the original 6.' Stone replied on 18 May agreeing that 'the numeral as at present inserted on the photograph you sent is very bad and won't do'. He sent a revised drawing to the printers that day; Harrisons confirmed on 21 May that it had prepared new bromides from Stone's drawing, and sent Langfield six stamp-size copies and one four times stamp-size. These showed a flat-topped numeral '3' as distinct from the round-topped '3' Stone had used elsewhere; they were approved by the DPS and DDG on 27 May, and by the APMG on 29 May. Essays of the 1s 3d were forwarded to Supplies the same day for printing to begin; essays of the 3d and 6d, plus bromides illustrating the change of values, followed on 5 June. Manning was notified of the amended numeral later that day; he agreed it was an improvement but decided not to involve Dr Lloyd or the Committee, as the printers had already been authorised to go ahead. He mentioned this in a letter to Miss Knight on 16 June and was told 'the change in the numeral is so slight that it is unlikely anyone would notice the alteration unless he had the original by him'.

Annual requirements of the new issue had been earlier estimated as 680,000 sheets of 3d (163.2 million stamps), 70,000 of 6d (16.8 million) and 12,000 of 1s 3d (2,880,000) and on 12 May it was recorded that Harrisons had been issued warrants for these amounts. By mid-June Supplies confirmed that initial supplies of 3d stamps would be with it by 5 August (in fact supplies of both the 3d and 1s 3d appear to have been completed by 28 July, with only the 6d still outstanding at the end of the month). It was agreed that issue of the 3d could take place on 18 August, the 6d and 1s 3d to follow on 29 September - issue dates were split in this way for all the Regional stamps to avoid charges of 'swamping' collectors and traders. Both issue dates were a Monday, the current philosophy being that counters were

under too much pressure with child allowances on Tuesdays and other business on Thursdays and Fridays, while many offices closed early on Wednesdays. Details of the new issues were released in press notices on 16 and 31 July. An unofficial leakage of information had occurred almost a year earlier, in the 'South Wales Echo' of 22 August 1957. This had shown some awareness of the Committee's deliberations, its only important revelation was that the Welsh stamps would feature leeks and dragons. It had nevertheless caused anxiety within the GPO because of the suspicion, voiced by the Regional Director, that Dr Lloyd as Chairman of the Committee might have been the source.

STAMP ISSUE AND PRESS COMMENT

On 18 August the 3d stamps were issued as scheduled, in sheets of 240 on cream paper with the new 'multiple Crowns' watermark - the issue of all Regional 3d stamps was its first use. Unlike the two previous watermarks of the reign it did not include the royal cypher 'E2R', over which Scottish nationalists had raised such resentment for a change to be made. The official explanation was that 'the existing watermark of E 2 R and a Crown causes damage to the paper by the angular nature of the E and 2'. Issue of the 6d and 1s 3d followed on 29 September.

The Regionals were generally welcomed by the public, the 'South Wales Evening Post' of 19 August praising the 'pictorial and novelty appeal' while lamenting the absence of a 2½d for postcards. The philatelic press had some cutting observations to make, however: 'Gibbons Stamp Monthly' for September 1958 stated that the 'appalling vertical lettering' on the 3d had broken 'various unwritten laws of design', and that the lettering generally was 'much too large'. This echoed 'Philatelic Magazine' for 22 August, which announced that the Welsh 3d was 'the worst design of them all', the lettering 'looks terrible', and the lines on the 6d design could be taken for rugby goalposts. The article also regretted the missed opportunity to launch a fully pictorial issue - 'those people who fondly thought that Snowdon would appear on the Welsh stamps ... are already sadly disappointed'. This reflection was also closely echoed by 'Gibbons Stamp Monthly', who asserted that 'a Welsh mountain is more reminiscent of Wales than a spiky dragon' and attacked the GPO's 'pseudo high-brow mania for obscure symbolism'. However, 'Stamp Collecting' for 29 August took a directly opposing view:

The Welsh stamps have a greater uniformity than the others, obviously because they were drawn by the same artist, and many people are impressed by the skilful way in which Reynolds Stone has worked the leeks into the 3d as a frame to the Queen's head ... On the whole, people like the new stamps.

On 11 October the Marquess of Anglesey, one of the Welsh Committee members, wrote to the APMG criticising the size and position of the value on the 1s 3d and the colour of the 6d.

His remarks on the 1s 3d were a minor quibble arising from a misunderstanding of what the Committee had agreed; the criticism of the 6d, comparing its colour unfavourably with that of the British Empire Games 6d issued in July, was felt more valid, and had a degree of support from Dr Lloyd. On 30 October Thompson replied explaining that because 6d stamps were heavily used for revenue purposes the Inland Revenue required them to be printed in doubly fugitive ink as a safeguard against fraud - this applied not only to the Welsh 6d but also the Scottish, Northern Ireland and UK stamps. The printers had obtained the best results possible, but the APMG conceded that the ink used on the Empire Games 6d was richer and more pleasing in colour; although the special 6d had been eligible for revenue use, it had not been printed in doubly fugitive ink because it seemed highly unlikely that the stamp would be used for such purposes in any significant quantity. The Marquess was not completely satisfied, and in a further letter on 20 November Thompson assured him that the three Regional and the UK 6d stamps were all printed in identical ink of the same colour - any apparent differences arose from variations in the depth of background, although parts of the Northern Ireland and Scottish stamps might appear darker. The APMG concluded that changes to the Welsh 6d, which the Marquess had apparently suggested, were out of the question.

A year later, 'Stamp Collecting' for 28 August 1959 had some interesting observations to make:

The Scottish and Welsh 3d stamps are very common and it is seldom that one gets a letter from those countries without one of the local stamps ... So few letters coming through from those regions with the 'English' 3d shows that the Scots and Welsh prefer to use their own stamps, even if it means buying them a few at a time over the counter instead of booklets and coils.

The article emphasised that the same did not apply to the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, or Northern Ireland Regionals (none of the Regionals were available in coil or book form).

Representative essays were transferred on 29 April to the Royal collection; others were retained for record purposes. The remainder was destroyed by the Accountant General's Department.

COLOUR AND VALUE VARIATIONS

From 1962 whiter paper came into general use when filtration of the water used in manufacture was introduced at the Ivybridge mills in Devon, where the GPO's stamp paper was produced - this made permanent an effect that had only occurred previously when heavy rains had temporarily 'cleansed' the normally brackish water supply. It was hoped that this would 'improve the quality of our permanent issue' and produce 'a more pleasing

and vivid stamp'. The change affected the Welsh 3d on 30 April 1962, the 6d on 18 July and the 1s 3d on 11 May 1964. As a result of the change, the 6d in 'deep claret' was now more accurately described as 'reddish purple', while the green of the 1s 3d varied in shades described as 'myrtle-green', 'deep myrtle-green' and 'deep dull green'. The 'deep lilac' of the 3d was not affected.

From 16 May 1967 the original 3d stamp was replaced by one with a 4mm central phosphor band, and was finally sold out in December that year; total sales figures of the original 3d were recorded as 902,289,240. From 6 December 1967 the 3d was issued with a single phosphor band on unwatermarked chalk coated paper; the single band watermarked stamps were sold out by January 1968.

An ultramarine 4d in the same design as the 3d was issued on 7 February 1966; its total sales figures, when reported as sold out exactly two years later, were 148,137,600. A version with two 9.5mm phosphor bands was issued in October 1967; this in turn was superseded on 21 June 1968 when the watermarked issue was replaced by stamps on unwatermarked chalky paper, with PVA (polyvinyl alcohol gum) instead of gum Arabic. The October 1967 and June 1968 versions were both sold out by April 1970.

On 4 September 1968 the 4d was reissued with a colour change to olive-sepia and one central phosphor band. A 5d in the same design and two phosphor bands was simultaneously issued, in a shade described as 'royal' or 'Stewart' blue. The 4d underwent a further change of colour to bright vermilion on 26 February 1969.

The 6d was sold out in March 1968 with total sales of 66,754,200; 14,311,440 of the 1s 3d were sold by 31 March 1968 while subsequent sales of the value were reportedly insignificant, although it was not sold out until July 1970. Both values had been overtaken by changes in postal rates, and on 1 March 1967 the 6d was succeeded by the bronze-green 9d and the 1s 3d by the 'grey-blue' or 'eggshell blue' 1s 6d in the same designs, and both were printed on watermarked paper with two phosphor bands. From 1 August 1969 the 1s 6d was printed on unwatermarked chalky paper with PVA gum.

PACKS AND HANDSTAMPS

The Welsh Regionals were included in two presentation packs: the first was issued in 1960 and included one of each of the stamps issued for each region in 1958. The packs were marked '7s 3d' for sale in the UK, or '\$1.20' for the USA. A later pack was issued on 9 December 1970 containing the December 1967 3d, the September 1968 4d and 5d, the March 1967 9d and 1s 6d, and the February 1969 4d; it had total sales of 32,964. The stamps and

packs still available were withdrawn on 25 November 1971; this applied to the Welsh and all other pre-decimal Regionals. They were invalidated for postal use on 1 March 1972.

No special arrangements for first day postings were made in 1958, but for the issue of the 4d in 1966 philatelic posting boxes were provided at Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Swansea and Newport. Items with the new stamp received a machine 'First Day of Issue' slogan postmark.

A full philatelic service, including special first day covers, was provided for the issue of the 9d and 1s 6d stamps on 1 March 1967, by the Edinburgh Philatelic Bureau. Orders for Welsh stamps only were supplied by Cardiff Head Post Office, and special post boxes were provided at Aberystwyth, Colwyn Bay, Llanelli, Llandudno, Swansea and Newport. A slogan postmark advertising the issue was also in use at these offices from 21 February to 1 March.

Special first day envelopes were on sale for the issue of 4d and 5d stamps on 4 September 1968; as before, a full philatelic service was supplied by the Edinburgh bureau, and for Welsh stamps only by Cardiff. Special post boxes were located at Aberystwyth, Caernarvon, Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Llanelli, Newport, Pontypridd, Porth and Swansea; exceptionally, there were also boxes at Chester, Hereford and Shrewsbury, although the Welsh stamps were not sold in these offices. A slogan postmark was again in use, from 12 August to 23 September, at Welsh offices only (those named, plus - apparently in error - Barmouth up to 23 August).

'FAITHFUL TO BOTH SIDES'

Although the question of sales in Monmouthshire had essentially been resolved by the end of August 1956, this was achieved despite controversy that continued for several years. The DDG summed up the problem on 27 August 1956, when he wrote to H W Stotesbury at the Home Office that 'Monmouthshire is regarded neither as part of Wales for all purposes nor as part of England'. On the one hand legislation as far back as Henry VIII's Ordinances in Wales Act of 1542-43 and as recently as the Local Government Act of 1933 stated the county to be English; on the other, Government offices in Monmouthshire were routinely issued with stationery bearing the Royal Badge of Wales, while the county coat of arms bore features including the Welsh dragon and emblems of the Welsh Princes of Gwent. (The county motto was *Utrique fidelis* - 'Faithful to both sides'.)

Allegiances in the county were divided between English and Welsh - when the head postmasters of Abergavenny, Pontypool and Newport reported the strength of pro-English feeling to Manning in August 1956, it persuaded him that the UK issue should remain available at all offices in the county, despite his earlier inclination. On 13 February 1957 he

reported to the DPS that there were areas of strong English feeling, especially in Newport – ‘business interests particularly are strongly linked with England ... Parts of the county bordering on Gloucestershire are very English.’ Against this, ‘large towns such as Abertillery, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar in the Valleys have a very strong Welsh flavour’.

Public opinion was frequently expressed: E W Rowthorn of Newport wrote to the PMG on 25 July 1956 that ‘the vast majority of the inhabitants of this English county are tired of being referred to as part of Wales’ and that the sale of ‘Welsh’ stamps would annoy the bulk of its inhabitants. On 27 August he wrote again declaring Monmouthshire to be ‘completely Anglicised’ - efforts to maintain the contrary were part of the foolish endeavour of Welsh Nationalists ‘to put the clock back 400 years’. On 10 November Richard Radclyffe of Monmouth wrote to his MP (Peter Thorneycroft) and the PMG:
I have been in Business in the English County of Monmouthshire for a number of years. If you propose to force me to use Welsh Stamps then I shall have to move from the County.

The Reverend LI Williams, quoted in ‘Hansard’ of 11 February 1957, had another view: Apart from a few cranks who search the files of the distant past for some very flimsy tokens of evidence to suggest that Monmouthshire belongs to England, no person acquainted with the county - its history, customs, place names, culture and way of life - would dream of regarding Monmouthshire people as anything but Welsh, no matter where their parents or grandparents came from originally.

Most opposition to the sale of the Welsh stamps in Monmouthshire was more mild - Manning wrote on 21 August 1956 that ‘there are many men like Lord Raglan who insist that they are Englishmen, and that Monmouthshire is an English County’. The guarantee that UK stamps would remain available was enough to mollify the 71-year old 4th Baron Raglan, one of the county’s foremost landowners and dignitaries, and most other complainants. An exception arose in February 1957 when Newport’s local Post Office Advisory Committee resolved that the existing arrangement should be reversed - UK stamps should be on general sale in the county, and the Welsh issue only available on request. Manning’s reaction was that Newport’s opinions were ‘definitely individual ... I am not prepared to admit that the views of the Advisory Committee are representative of the majority of public opinion in Monmouthshire.’ His recommendation upholding the existing arrangement was accepted.

The Union of Postal Workers had been promised a review after the Regional stamps had been on sale for a year, and this was done. An examination was made of comparative sales figures in Monmouthshire for both issues of the 3d, 6d and 1s 3d values from 18 August 1958 to the end of August 1959; this revealed that the proportion of UK issues sold had never been higher than 6.6 per cent (in the first two weeks), had steadily dropped to 0.3

per cent by the year end, and had remained there since. It was concluded that the maintenance of stocks of both issues, while hardly worthwhile from the sales viewpoint, caused 'no appreciable amount of extra work' in Monmouthshire offices; meanwhile 'there is clearly a section of the public ... which repudiates the county's link with Wales', and to terminate the standing arrangement might cause a public outcry.

The subsequent record is scanty until August 1961, when correspondence disclosed that the Monmouthshire arrangement was now maintained at Abergavenny, Chepstow, Pontypool and Newport only, although a similar 'dual stocking' scheme was also in place at Cardiff; demand at Abergavenny and Cardiff was minimal. PSD's recommendation to the Regional Director on 28 August 1961 was that matters be left as they stood and that no further review was needed.

The Regional stamps were never supplied to certain offices that had Monmouthshire postal addresses but were situated outside the county boundaries in England - these were Beachley, Brockweir, Redbrook, Sedbury, Tutshill, Woodcroft, and (notwithstanding the name) Welsh Newton. These places still receive only the UK definitives, and not the 'Country' stamps (as the Regionals subsequently became known). As the new county of Gwent, Monmouthshire became an integral part of Wales from 1 July 1974.

DESIGNER OF THE STAMPS

REYNOLDS STONE, CBE, RDI, FRSA, a descendant of Sir Joshua Reynolds, was born on 13 March 1909. After education at Eton and Magdalen College, Cambridge, he studied printing at the Cambridge University Press. Later he worked under Eric Gill and for the Wessex Press, Taunton, before freelancing as a designer and specialist in book decoration. He received many commissions from such bodies as the National Trust, Arts Council, and HM Stationery Office. After wartime RAF service he designed the 3d Peace stamp of 1946, the first of many for the Post Office - apart from the Welsh set of 1958, his later successes included the same year's British Empire Games 3d, the 1960 Europa and 1963 Paris Conference Centenary issues, and the General Letter Office Tercentenary 3d of 1960. His other designs included banknotes and Sir Winston Churchill's Memorial in Westminster Abbey. He died on 23 June 1979.

Giles Allen
July 26 1996

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