

## Salvation Army Centenary

1965



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In 1865 the Salvation Army was founded as the Christian Mission in Whitechapel in London by William Booth, an independent revivalist and former Methodist. In 1878 the present name was adopted, though Booth initially resisted the use of military titles and uniform. Almost immediately after the name change the Salvation Army emerged as a new force in the religious life of the country and then spread overseas. By the 1960s it had become established in 70 countries around the world.

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### ORIGINS OF ISSUE

On 16 March 1964, the Chief Executive Officer of the Salvation Army, Colonel T F Kiff, wrote to the GPO's Public Relations Officer about the Army's centenary and whether there might be an issue of stamps. This request was passed onto the Postal Services Department (PSD): a reply to Colonel Kiff was drafted but it appears as if it was never sent.

The proposed reply was negative as the policy restricted special stamps to those marking important current events of national or international interest and Royal and postal anniversaries. Other anniversaries were excluded; British history was so rich it was invidious to make choices. As such the Salvation Army's centenary was excluded, unless the planned celebrations proved to be an important current event in their own right.

With such a prolonged silence from the GPO Colonel Kiff wrote again in early June to repeat his request. In a reply of 25 June he was told that the centenary would be included when the time came for the 1965 special stamp programme to be considered.

In mid-August 1964, a minute outlining the projected stamp programme for 1965 went before the Deputy Director General. The list of eight 'possible' issues included:

Philatelic Catalogue Centenary - February  
Third Assembly International Quiet Sun Years - mid - 65  
Centenary of International Telecommunications Union - 17 May  
Enterprise Neptune - May  
International Co-operation Year - June  
Opening of Post Office Tower - June  
International Sports Festival & Exhibition - August  
900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dedication of Westminster Abbey - December

The Salvation Army Centenary was included in a list headed 'doubtful but not yet turned down'.

When he had not been contacted further by November, Colonel Kiff wrote again to the GPO. This time he was merely told that the special stamp programme for 1965 had yet to be decided.

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## A POLICY REVIEWED

November 1964 marked the beginning of a period of great change within the GPO. A Labour victory in the general election of October resulted in Anthony Wedgwood Benn becoming the Postmaster General (PMG); one of his first acts was to initiate a review of policy on stamps. On 25 November the Post Office Board approved new criteria governing the issue of special stamps:

to celebrate events of national and international importance;  
to commemorate important anniversaries;  
to reflect the British contribution to world affairs; and  
to extend public patronage to the arts by encouraging the development of minuscule art.

This new policy was announced to the House of Commons by the PMG on 15 December 1964; he also invited both Members of Parliament and the public to submit suggestions for new issues. At about the same time seven stamp issues were provisionally approved for release in 1965.

Centenary of International Telecommunications Union: 9d, 1s 3d - May  
700th Anniversary of Parliament: 6d, 2s 6d - June  
Centenary of Salvation Army: 3d, 1s 6d - June  
Opening of Post Office Tower: 4d, 1s - June/July  
25th Anniversary of Battle of Britain: 4d, 9d, 1s 3d - September  
Commonwealth Arts Festival: 6d, 1s 6d - September/October  
20th Anniversary of United Nations: 4d, 1s 3d - October.

On 1 February 1965, the PMG details of the new stamps for 1965 to the House of Commons.

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## PROJECTED TIMETABLE

The production timetable for the Salvation Army stamps was as follows:

Briefs to artists - 1 March 1965

Designs to GPO - 22 March

Selected designs to printers - 29 March

Essays from printers - 12 April

Approved essays to printers - 19 April

Date of issue - 1 July.

The PMG felt it was of great importance that, in the future, the views of the sponsors of special issues be communicated to the designers. As far as the Salvation Army was concerned, he had in mind stamps that expressed the Army's crusading spirit.

In February the GPO consulted the Council of Industrial Design (CoID) regarding possible artists. It initially recommended Andrew Restall, Shirley Thompson and Geoffrey Trenaman; M C Farrar Bell was recommended later. All four artists were invited on 1 March to submit designs; invitations were extended to the printing firms of Harrison & Sons and Bradbury Wilkinson on 3 March. The latter company declined and so on 5 March Stewart Black was invited instead.

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## INSTRUCTIONS TO ARTISTS

'Instructions to Artists' were sent out in which were told that a set of two designs was required, though they were at liberty to submit alternative sets, with a fee of 60 guineas, (£63) per design up to a maximum of 120 guineas (£126) for any one artist. An additional fee of 190 guineas would be paid for each design adopted.

Artists were to make the Queen's head a 'dominant feature', to include the value as well as the title 'Salvation Army Centenary'. The designs could be either symbolic or pictorial, though the choice of a specific theme was left to the artist. They were informed that the Salvation Army had suggested the use of the Army flag or crest; the Salvation Army also suggested 'the use of three symbolic figures in uniform, one of the figures to be that of a coloured individual to bring out the theme of all nations, all colours'. The stamps would be printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons. They were reminded of the qualities of the photogravure process and asked to ensure not only that their materials permitted

photography of each tone in its true value, but also that they included no details so fine so as to be lost when reduced to stamp size.

All designs were to be on good quality white card. Artists were asked to use a maximum of three colours for each stamp; white was the preferred background colour.

The deadline for the submission of designs was Monday, 22 March.

It would appear, from a hand-written note added to the draft copy of the 'Instructions to Artists', that it was intended that the PMG's wishes regarding the stamps be passed on to the artists. Unfortunately, it seems as if the was not added to the final version of the instructions before sent; the artists were therefore contacted on 5 march to 'try and illustrate in their designs something of the crusading spirit of the Salvation Army', and to contact Colonel Kiff with any questions they might have.

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## **SUBMITTED DESIGNS**

The following designs were received:

M C Farrar Bell – 4, sent 19 March

Andrew Restall – 2, received 22 March

Shirley Thompson – 1, received 22 March

Geoffrey Trenaman – 2, sent 19 March

Stewart Black – 4, sent 19 March

Harrison & Sons (Adrian Bailey and Barry Trengrove) – 4, sent 23 March.

Miss Thomson's design is described in the files as unfinished; in the letter that accompanied her submission, she explained that she did not feel her lettering was good enough to even attempt to add it herself, so she asked that the GPO add this for her.

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## **INITIAL SELECTION OF DESIGNS**

Present at a meeting of the Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC) on 25 March were Sir Kenneth Clark (Chair), J Fitton, A Games, Prof. R Guyatt, P Reilly, Mrs C G Tomrley (Secretary), R F York (of Harrisons and Sons, stamp printers), and A A Mead and D H Beaumont (of the Post Office).

Sir Kenneth Clark reported on a visit, with Mr Fitton and Mr Reilly, to the PMG, during which he had protested about the 'overweighted 1965 programme of stamp issues'. The PMG admitted the Committee had been 'placed in a difficulty' and that it might not be getting

what it wanted as far as well-designed stamps were concerned; he asked that the Committee see the programme through nonetheless. The PMG agreed that the Committee should be given more time in the future; he promised that the special stamp programme for 1966 would be fixed by June 1965, after which no ideas for further issues would be admissible. The SAC was asked to suggest suitable subjects for stamps.

The Committee was shown the submitted designs; it would appear it was not overly impressed with the quality. This would explain why the SAC only recommended two designs to be essayed and declined to recommend a second choice. The minutes note 'The Committee recalled that there had been three occasions recently when their second choice had been selected by the Queen and they were happy to avoid risking this in the present instance.'

The SAC selected Miss Thompson's unfinished design; it was agreed she be asked to complete it, but if she was unable to do so then the Committee intended to put forward her original design. One of Farrar Bell's designs was also selected.

The GPO was unable to get Miss Thompson to complete her design and so, on 1 April, Harrisons was asked to add the finishing touches.

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## ESSAYS

Essays were sent from Harrisons on 14 April 1965, while two further essays were sent on 5 May showing the value as 3d.

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## FINAL SELECTION

The SAC met on 27 April, those present being as before plus M Gray, at which the essays were viewed. It appears that the Committee was compelled to recommend second choice designs so the Queen had alternatives when the designs were submitted for approval. Somewhat reluctantly it selected a design by G Trenaman, together with a second design by Farrar Bell that showed Salvation Army marchers and flags. The minutes of this meeting emphasised that it 'greatly preferred' the first choice designs. The designs selected were:

- A1 - design by Shirley Thompson (first choice);
- A2 - design by M C Farrar Bell (first choice);
- A3 - design by M C Farrar Bell (second choice);
- A4 - design by Geoffrey Trenaman (second choice).

By mid-May 1965, production of the Salvation Army stamps had fallen behind schedule and not all involved knew why. On 14 May the Supplies Department wrote to the Postal Services Department, being under the impression that the issue date was still 1 July, and urged immediate printing if this date was to be met. Despite continued concerns, it was not appraised of any change of issue date.

An overtime ban by staff at Supplies Department depots had already caused a number of earlier special issues to be postponed until later in the year. It would appear from internal correspondence that the Director of Postal Services decided to defer submitting the Salvation Army stamps to the Palace until this labour dispute had been resolved. However, he was prepared to go so far as to authorise the production of printing cylinders for the designs favoured by the PMG so that printing could start immediately the Queen granted her approval of the designs. The designs favoured by the PMG were in fact A2 and A4.

The Postal Services Department also felt that its preparations had been delayed by the SAC's insistence upon having a completed version of Miss Thompson's design: it was felt that this had cost two weeks at essay stage.

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## ROYAL APPROVAL

On 11 June 1965, the PMG eventually wrote to the Palace seeking the Queen's approval of the stamp designs. In his letter he explained that, although A1 and A2 were the SAC's first choice, he favoured A2 and A4. He described A1 as perhaps the least colourful of all the submitted designs and felt that the positioning of the Queen's portrait to the left of the design would attract criticism. Also A3, although possessed of certain attractive features, was a design he felt had weaknesses. The PMG commended A2 as 'a very attractive design which faithfully and successfully portrays the Salvation Army in the manner in which it is perhaps best known to the man in the street'. In addition A4 was recommended because it was both colourful and 'conveys at a glance the universality of the Army's appeal'.

He added that, should the Queen approve his choice of designs, then A2 would be the 3d value and A4 would be the 1s 6d. The Queen approved A2 and A4 on 18 June 1965.

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## PRODUCTION DETAILS

By early June the issue date of 1 July had officially been abandoned. On 26 June the PMG announced a revised timetable for the special issue programme for 1965; the new date for the Salvation Army stamps was 9 August.

The approved essays were sent on the printers on 22 June.

The Salvation Army stamps, together with those marking the Joseph Lister Centenary, were previewed on 7 July. On 14 July the meagre philatelic services for the launch of the Salvation Army stamps were announced in a separate Press and Broadcast Notice. These extended only to philatelic posting boxes at 59 offices around the country for customers wishing to post their own first day covers. These covers were cancelled with a first day of issue handstamp. The GPO did not produce a special first day envelope, nor a presentation pack.

Both stamps were produced with and without phosphor; the 3d having one phosphor band, the 1s 6d having three. The following sales figures were recorded.

Ordinary

3d – 54,312,000

1s 6d – 5,244,120

Phosphor

3d – 4,261,200

1s 6d – 652,320.

The ordinary 3d sold out in December 1965; the remaining values were withdrawn from sale on 28 February 1966.

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## POSTMASTER GENERAL'S GIFTS

It was the custom, special cards bearing the two stamps were sent to the Queen; Princess Margaret; Prime Minister; Speaker of the House of Commons; previous PMGs/Assistant PMGs, whether still in Parliament or not (approximately 14); the PMG or equivalent minister of the self-governing Commonwealth countries (21); SAC members (8); the two designers; General Frederick Couatts of the Salvation Army.

SIMON BATES

27 MAY 1993

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## REFERENCES

British Postal Museum & Archive file:  
P 626/66 – Special Stamps, Salvation Army Centenary.