

STAMP HISTORY

400th Anniversary of the Birth of Inigo Jones

Date of issue: 15 AUGUST 1973



The 1973 stamp programme was considered by the Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC) on 20 October 1971. After discussion the following subjects were recommended:

An EEC issue - designs to be commissioned as soon as the House of Commons made a decision on the Common Market.

Tourist and Wembley anniversary stamp.

General Anniversaries - featuring Livingstone, Wren and Inigo Jones.

British Paintings, probably featuring Reynolds and Raeburn, and possibly also other artists.

Charity or Thematic issue.

Christmas issue.

At the SAC meeting on 15 February 1972 the Chairman, E G White, Director of Marketing, outlined the proposed programme: minor amendments had been made to the recommendations put forward by the Committee. It was proposed there be another British explorers issue in 1973, this time devoted to explorers of 'hot' regions (as opposed to the 'cold' regions featured in the British Polar Explorers series in 1972) and framed around the centenary of the death of Livingstone. There was also to be another set in the architecture series, a theme that had first appeared in 1969 with cathedrals. The series had featured, in the following years: rural architecture (1970), modern university buildings (1971) and village churches (1972). It was proposed that the 1973 issue be based on the works of Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren. Following further discussion it was suggested that 'since there was a wealth of material, the architecture series could be devoted to the works of one of these architects, preferably Inigo Jones, keeping the other in hand for a separate issue'. The suggestion to commemorate Inigo Jones had come as a result of research within the Post Office and no requests for such an issue had been received from the public.

ROSALIND DEASE INVITED

Rosalind Dease, who had designed a number of stamp issues for the Post Office, including Christmas (1968), Literary Anniversaries (1970 and 1971) and the Tutankhamun stamp of 1972, was invited to submit preliminary roughs of four stamps commemorating Inigo Jones. Dease was advised by Stuart Rose, Post Office Design Director, that of the four designs, two should deal with his buildings and two with his theatre designs. In case she encountered difficulty bringing the theatre into an architectural series, Dease was asked to produce two extra designs with buildings.

At some unknown stage, it was proposed that the stamps be produced by the intaglio process. Early in March 1972 Don Beaumont, Postal Headquarters, discussed the matter with the printers Bradbury, Wilkinson and Company asking whether it would be possible to produce the stamps in time for August release. The printers replied that if the designs were available by 1 May then proofs of four values would be ready for Post Office approval by 1 September. Subject to approval being given by the middle of October the stamps could be ready by 1 May 1973. It was pointed out that the designs should be 'suitable for steel plate printing, in either two or three colours, and also for phosphor printing'.

ARTWORK RECEIVED

Early in May 1972 Dease submitted the following artwork:
three designs of buildings and two designs of stage sets;
alternative designs comprising three of buildings, one theatre set, one masque costume,
three cards bearing miniatures.

One further design was submitted depicting the Banqueting House, Whitehall. This had been requested by Stuart Rose as a substitute for the costume design if necessary.

ARTWORK SEEN BY SAC

On 3 May, Bradbury Wilkinson sent Beaumont various items that the company thought might be useful to show at the SAC meeting the following day. These were: four cards, with each card showing a steel plate print of each of the four colours that Dease had suggested to be used for the different values; four cards showing letterpress plates of the Queen's profile in gold together with two cards on which were stuck experimental bank note prints. These bank notes highlighted the quality of the printing machines in that the 'cleanness of the wipe' left no tint on the paper. Also enclosed were prints of the Queen's profile that had

been engraved at the time of producing the Literary Anniversaries stamps (issued in 1971) and printed in red.

At its meeting on 4 May the Committee was shown the artwork produced by Rosalind Dease, who had been invited to the meeting, and explained that because Inigo Jones was as well-known for his stage designs as for his architecture, she had prepared two designs of stage decor and three architectural designs. Having discussed the designs, the Committee agreed that two se-tenant sets should be produced, one using the theatrical sets and the other featuring Prince's Lodging, Newmarket and St Paul's, Covent Garden. It was further agreed that each se-tenant set should have the Queen's head and value on the left hand side of one stamp and on the right of the other. The Committee preferred that the head be printed in gold, to be considered by the printers. It was felt that the wording appearing on the stamps should be as far as possible in keeping with the period and to this effect Dease was to provide Bradbury Wilkinson with photocopies of the print to be used.

On 15 May Supplies Division wrote to Beaumont asking what decisions had been made regarding the series. Beaumont replied the following day that Bradbury Wilkinson had been told that the Post Office expected them to produce the stamps and he was hoping to have designs for essay purposes shortly. He added that there were to be four separate designs but only two values namely two se-tenant 3p stamps and two se-tenant 5p stamps.

On 26 July Bradbury Wilkinson sent Beaumont the following:
12 folders each containing 2 by 3p and 2 by 5p stamp proofs,
4 original artwork,
4 production artwork,
2 bromides of the double stamps.

ESSAYS EXAMINED

Dease and two representatives of Bradbury Wilkinson, Atkins and Ridler, were present at the SAC meeting on 27 July, when the first essays were examined. It was pointed out that these were first pulls and therefore attention would be paid to the colours at a later stage.

Several points were raised by the Committee, including the following.

The Queen's head should be in line with the top line of lettering – Ridler explained that this was on a separate die and could easily be corrected.

The Committee did not like the phosphor band in its present position – it was told that the question of phosphor for this issue was being examined.

Sir Paul Reilly said he would like to see a different association of vignettes within the same value for the stamps, to which Ridler added that the dies could be separated at this stage.

After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the stamps should be re-paired so that Court Masque Scenery would move to form the right hand stamp with St Paul's Covent Garden, while Court Masque Costumes would pair with Prince's Lodging Newmarket. This would involve the following colour changes:

Court Masque Scenery – green

Prince's Lodging, Newmarket – blue

Court Masque Costumes – purple

St Paul's Covent Garden – sepia.

Stuart Rose pointed out a weak area in the design on the left hand side of the stamp depicting Court Masque Scenery that, he said, could be strengthened by lengthening the caption to read 'Court Masque Stage Scene'. The Committee agreed this should be done. Some members were not happy about the oblique strokes in the typography. Dease was of the opinion that a hyphen could equally well be used in the date. It was agreed that it should replace the stroke, but the stroke in 'Architect/Designer' should not be changed.

It was agreed that subject to the suggested amendments work should go ahead.

The phosphor bars were thought to inhibit the designs and, as an improvement, it was agreed that the stamps should be produced with 'all-over gravure phosphor'.

The SAC met on 7 September when further essays were shown incorporating some of the amendments, namely:

the stamps had been re-paired as suggested;

the colour changes had been made;

the position of the Queen's head had been aligned with the top line of lettering.

At this stage no typographic modifications had been made.

The amendments were approved by the Committee: it was agreed that work should continue and the typographic amendments carried out.

The following day Beaumont wrote to Ridler confirming that the Post Office wanted final proofs incorporating the following amendments agreed by the SAC:

the substitution of a hyphen in lieu of the oblique stroke between the dates 1573 - 1652 on all four stamps;

the title 'Court Masque Scenery' on the 5p essay to be substituted by 'Court Masque Stage Scene' and the 5p value to be replaced by 3p;

the 3p value on the 'Prince's Lodging Newmarket' to be replaced by 5p;

the pairing of the designs to be as follows:

(a) 3p values, 'St Paul's Covent Garden' (left) and 'Court Masque Stage Scene' (right)

(b) 5p values 'Court Masque Costumes' (left) and 'Prince's Lodging Newmarket' (right).

The colours were to be the same as the second proof essays.

On 12 September Bradbury Wilkinson wrote to Beaumont saying that the company understood there was a possibility of the denominations of 3p and 5p being altered due to an increase in postage tariffs, and if this was so, it would need definite instructions by 15 September. Bradbury Wilkinson was asked to await further instructions; however, the company wrote again on 18 September reminding Beaumont that, to date, it had engraved dies of four values, of which proofs had been submitted in July, with further proofs in various colours in August and early September. New dies were being engraved for final proofing. Any alterations in denominations would necessitate another set of dies and additional letterpress blocks and proofs. This extensive preliminary work, it said, would 'add considerably to the cost of the issue'. It hoped it would be possible for the Post Office to finalise instructions at an early date.

On 25 October W N de Segundo, of Bradbury Wilkinson, wrote to Beaumont enclosing six cards each bearing two 4½p proofs, each of different design, and two 6p proofs, again each of different designs, of the Inigo Jones stamps. The following day de Segundo wrote again to Beaumont this time 'putting down on paper' what the printers understood to be the requirements for the Inigo Jones stamps, including:

Printing -

One all over phosphor printing.

One three colour intaglio printing per pair of stamps giving two intaglio colours on each stamp.

One letterpress printing reproducing the Queen's portrait in gold ink.

One letterpress printing reproducing the denominations and marginal inscriptions.

Quantities -

The total quantities of stamps to be:

Value A: 600,000 sheets

Value B: 120,000 sheets.

W N de Segundo asked that a spoilage rate of 4¼ per cent be allowed. Regarding delivery, he said that an initial production sheet would be ready in mid January and provided there was no delay in approval, there would be a delivery of a token quantity in the middle of February. Fifty per cent of the quantities ordered for each value would be ready at the end of April with completion at the end of June. All points raised in the letter were approved by Beaumont.

On 1 December Beaumont wrote to Bradbury Wilkinson asking that essays be prepared in the following values:

Court Masque Costumes and St Paul's Covent Garden in 3½p, 4p and 4½p;

Prince's Lodging Newmarket and Court Masque Stage Scene in 5½p, 6p and 6½p values.

On 10 January 1973 Bradbury Wilkinson sent Beaumont card-mounted essays of the 3½p, 5½p, 4p, 6p, 4½p, and 6½p values and stated it was extremely worried about making the delivery on time. Beaumont replied that unfortunately he was still unable to confirm which values were to be used. Since this was the case he gave authority to go ahead with the steel plates and phosphor printing to enable them to submit proof sheets within the time schedule. He also informed them that the Post Office chemist had found the phosphor printing samples already submitted satisfactory. On 15 January Bradbury Wilkinson sent Beaumont two cards, each showing proofs of the two stamps of 3p and two stamps of 5p denominations, as requested.

As with all stamp designs the essays were submitted for the Queen's approval, although the date on this occasion is unknown. However, on 12 February 1973 Beaumont wrote to the printers enclosing essays approved by the Queen, subject to amended values. At this stage precise values were still unknown. Two days later Beaumont wrote again saying it had now been decided that the values would be 3p and 5p and asked that proof sheets, with the appropriate values, be sent to him.

It looked as if production could now go ahead. However, on 21 February W N de Segundo telephoned Postal Headquarters saying serious trouble had arisen due to industrial action at Bradbury Wilkinson. Such was the urgency that he visited PHQ that afternoon to discuss the matter.

He explained that the print workers' union, NATSOPA, had 'blacked' the 'Magna' machine on which the stamps were to be printed. Negotiations were in hand on setting up an arbitration committee, but how long this would take was unknown. The position was considered critical; with the recess process now completely ruled out, it was essential to find an alternative method of printing.

Beaumont discussed the matter with Stuart Rose and S G Hutton, of Supplies Department. They decided to ask Bradbury Wilkinson if the company could cope with a litho issue since the design lent itself to this process.

Beaumont was subsequently informed that:

- (a) the vignettes would be produced in 'dry' litho;
- (b) the Queen's head and value in letterpress (as envisaged for recess).

This meant that the design remained as approved by the Queen. The only difference would be process change from recess to 'dry' litho only affecting the vignettes. Bradbury

Wilkinson expected to supply proofs of the new process on 1 March and was confident that this new arrangement would enable the company to meet all delivery requirements.

By the next day, 22 February, there was real danger of the situation escalating; W N de Segundo telephoned to say that NATSOPA was trying to 'black' the whole job irrespective of the processes used. Bradbury Wilkinson intended to carry on with litho and letterpress essays as far as possible and as alternative it would also press ahead with complete letterpress essays. The company also heard a rumour that the job could be blacked throughout the UK if the Post Office attempted to transfer it elsewhere and Segundo asked what the Post Office reaction would be to sending the job to the company's Canada plant. This idea of producing the stamps in Canada was rejected by the Post Office.

The whole situation compelled the Post Office to look elsewhere for a solution. Harrison and Sons was consulted and gave assurance of its ability to cope with the issue without jeopardising the rest of the year's stamp production. It was noted that NATSOPA members at Harrisons might support their colleagues at Bradbury Wilkinson and 'black' the series. Mr York of Harrisons was aware of this but was prepared to put the matter to the test.

It was now feared that the dispute could extend to 'blacking' all stamp production. Beaumont thought that it was therefore 'advisable to contain the situation within Bradbury Wilkinson's orbit in the hope they will be able to complete production ... without further hindrance'.

On 28 February Bradbury Wilkinson sent Beaumont three sheets printed by the dry offset process showing letterpress proofs of the 3p and 5p values, three sheets showing four se-tenant vignettes of the 3p value, and three sheets showing four se-tenant vignettes of the 5p value.

On 2 March Beaumont wrote to Bradbury Wilkinson confirming that the decision had been made to go ahead with the dual process combining offset dry litho and letterpress. He also confirmed that the proof sheets should show the proposed new values of 3½p and 5½p.

Beaumont wrote again on 5 March saying 'I am afraid that I must now ask you to pull off additional proofs of the 5½p and 6p value.' He added 'it is still not absolutely certain which values will prevail, but I think it expedient if we were to see proof sheets in the 5½p and 6p values'.

On 15 March Beaumont, Rose and Dease visited the Bradbury Wilkinson factory to pass the available proof sheets. J Taylor, of Supplies Department, visited the factory earlier that morning for a detailed scrutiny of the proof sheets. All the sheets were considered satisfactory. It was now confirmed that the values were to be 3p and 5p. On 13 April

Bradbury Wilkinson telephoned Beaumont saying it was running into difficulties with the Queen's head. The gold print in letterpress was not up to the standard it had wished and the company suggested that the problem could be overcome with a varnish underprint. Authority was given to proceed with this.

During May there was again uncertainty over the values and Bradbury Wilkinson was instructed to prepare a new printing plate for the lower value showing 3½p. However, on 23 May the Post Office confirmed that printing could continue showing the 3p value.

On 12 June 1973 a Press and Broadcast Notice was issued advising the change of process for printing the stamps. Postal Headquarters had instructed that the release should not be issued for the time being, but it appears that the Public Relations Department released it prematurely and without the normal 'vetting'. The press release was said to be 'quite wrong' and, made no mention of letterpress; the printing process was also referred to as 'web offset lithograph' which did not exist. Bradbury Wilkinson used 'a combination of both offset and direct letterpress processes'.

THE STAMPS ARE ISSUED

The Post Office introduced a tariff increase on 10 September: to avoid clashing unduly with the issue of definitive stamps of the new rates, the 3p special stamp distribution was cut by 50 per cent to all Head Offices, except for Inner London, where requirements were met in full. Requisitions for the 5p stamp were met in full. Despite the initial problems with industrial relations at the printers the four special stamps commemorating the 400th anniversary of the birth of architect and designer Inigo Jones were issued as scheduled on 15 August.

The four stamps were in two pairs, se-tenant, of 3p and 5p values. One of the 3p stamps, printed in sepia on a white background, showed the famous Tuscan portico of St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, London. A press release, issued on 5 July 1973, described the church as follows:

This church was 'the focal climax of the piazza of Covent Garden' which Jones, at that time Surveyor of the King's Works, designed on commission from Francis Russell, fourth Earl of Bedford. The Earl had cautioned Jones not to 'go to any considerable expense' on the church for, he said: 'I would not have it much better than a barn.' 'Well then,' replied Jones, 'you shall have the handsomest barn in England.'

The illustration of St Paul's was based on an 18th century engraving. The side gateways, shown on the stamp, were removed during renovation work between 1878 and 1882.

The other 3p stamp, printed in purple on white, showed costumes for Oberon and Titania, from original Inigo Jones drawings in the Duke of Devonshire's collection at Chatsworth. The costumes were designed in 1611 for Ben Johnson's masque, 'Oberon and the Faery Prince', which had been commissioned by Henry, Prince of Wales.

One of the 5p stamps, in blue on white, featured the Prince's Lodging, Newmarket which was demolished in the 1660s; as the actual building was too short lived for adequate records of it to exist, the elevation was taken from an original Inigo Jones pen and wash drawing. The other 5p stamp, in green on white, showed the stage scenery for the Oberon masque, and like the masque costumes, was taken from original drawings in the Duke of Devonshire's collection at Chatsworth.

All four stamps had the Queen's head in gold. Since 1971 the profile head by Arnold Machin had been used on decimal special issues. However, on this occasion, along with the 1972 General Anniversaries and the 1974 UPU Centenary sets, the profile used was from the coinage design by Mrs Mary Gillick adapted by David Gentleman. The Stanley Gibbons Catalogue states that 'The Machin head can be distinguished from the Gentleman adaptation of the Gillick profile by two, instead of one, laurel leaves on top of the Queen's head.'

The stamps were horizontal, slightly larger than double definitive stamp size. The stamps, with all-over phosphor, were issued in sheets of 100.

INIGO JONES

Inigo Jones, son of a Smithfield clothmaker, was born on 15 July 1573 and christened in the church of St Bartholomew the Less, West Smithfield. As a youth he was an apprentice to a joiner in St Paul's Churchyard but, showing artistic promise, particularly landscape painting, was sent under the patronage of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, to 'Italy and the politer parts of Europe'.

It was whilst in Italy that Jones learnt much of the architecture and designing of theatres and theatrical scenery, and with his designs for court masques, a form of entertainment, combining song, dance and drama very popular at the time, he became the first to introduce movable and intricate scenery to the English stage. Samuel Daniels, the poet, praised Jones' ingenuity: 'In these things, wherein the only life consists in show, the art and invention of the architect gives the greatest grace and is of the utmost importance.' Masques were, at this time, extremely popular and Jones was the most famous masque designer of his day.

Inigo Jones returned to the Latin States in 1613, this time accompanied by the Earl and Countess, having already climbed the social ladder largely on account of his work on the Royal Court Masques. In Venice Jones met Vincenzo Scamozzi whose style he studied for nearly two months. His constant reference work during this trip was Palladio's famous treatise 'Quattro libri dell' architettura' and his personal annotated copy of this is in the Worcester College collection at Oxford.

On his return to England he was invited to take up the position of Surveyor General of Royal Buildings by King James I, which he did in September 1615. His work continued until the execution of King Charles I.

His earliest designs, the New Exchange in the Strand and the completion of the central tower of the old St Paul's Cathedral, both from 1608, suffered from certain features being more suitable for scenery in a masque, but unrealisable in building terms. It was not until after his second trip to the Latin States did his reputation as an architect flourish. His greatest work is generally considered to be the Banqueting House in London's Whitehall. At a time when the 'Jacobean' style was fashionable, Inigo Jones affected a dramatic change, basing his architecture on his studies of Italian Renaissance and Roman principles. An earlier Banqueting House was destroyed by fire on the night of 12 January 1619. The rebuilding was completed by 1622.

He also built the Queen's House, Greenwich, although this took somewhat longer than the Banqueting House. Plans were finished in 1616 but the building was not completed until 19 years later. It had been started for the Queen of James I. Anne died in 1619 and the work on the building was only resumed for Henrietta Maria, the Queen of Charles I, in 1630.

His later years were not so fortunate as following the Civil War, when the Parliamentarians came to power, he paid heavy fines having been on the losing side, and died in poverty in 1652.

QUANTITIES SOLD

The quantities sold of the stamps were:

3p - 21,296,500 pairs

5p - 5,337,300 pairs.

As was normal practice the stamps were available from all post offices for a period of around two months, being withdrawn on 17 October, after which they were only available from the Philatelic Bureau until 14 August 1974.

FIRST DAY COVERS

An official first day envelope, designed by Rosalind Dease, was available from the Philatelic Bureau and all Head Post Offices. The Bureau also provided covers bearing all four stamps cancelled with a pictorial handstamp featuring a motif formed from the initials of Inigo Jones. Covers bearing the Inigo Jones stamps posted in philatelic posting boxes received the standard first day of issue cancellation. Presentation packs, designed by Dease and containing one each of the stamps, were also available.

Andy Pendlebury
March 1994

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