

SPECIAL STAMP

European Architectural Heritage Year

Date of issue: 23 APRIL 1975



European Architectural Heritage Year 1975 (EAHY) was announced three years previously; prior to its announcement, however, there were comments being made that might have resulted in a stamp issue similar to the one that eventually appeared. Early 1972 was a time of growing concern over threats to the environment, including its architecture; in early April Sir Paul Reilly, a long-term member of the Post Office's Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC), featured in a series of 'Evening News' articles on 'Ugly London'. He drew attention to the ways in which distinguished buildings were menaced by ill-considered planning or defaced by dirt and advertising, and to those public buildings which were thoroughly undistinguished - such as the Haymarket offices of the Design Council (of which he was Director), designed in 1939, built in 1954, and 'about as banal a piece of 1930s modernism as one can imagine'. On 1 May the Countess of Dartmouth, an active figure in London's local government and a member of various town planning, environmental and historic building committees, was sent a note by a colleague, Frederick W. Clarke. He enclosed an 8 cent stamp of USA's 'Historic Preservation' series issued in late 1971: 'We have much more reason for a similar set in this country. Is this something which would meet with your approval?'

Lady Dartmouth thought Mr Clarke's idea 'brilliant' and passed it to B J Brown, Chairman of the Greater London Council's Historic Buildings Board; in turn Brown put the suggestion to Sir Paul Reilly on 31 May, proposing it could be linked with 'European Heritage Year' in 1975; he had heard that its announcement was in the offing and that it would concentrate 'on the question of historic buildings and areas'. Writing independently on the same day, Michael Middleton, Director of the Civic Trust, advised Don Beaumont of Postal Marketing and Stuart Rose, Design Adviser to the Post Office, that 1975 was already designated as EAHY by the Council of Europe, and that a British committee was being formed to devise a programme of national participation:

This is by way of being a sequel to the very successful 1970 Conservation Year, save of course that the earlier Year was concerned with the countryside and that 1975 will be concerned with historic towns and buildings ... Britain was one of the few

countries which failed to mark 1970 with a special stamps issue - I do hope it may be possible to do something rather special for 1975.

FIRST PROPOSAL TO SAC

The proposal was raised at the SAC meeting on 15 June; in a letter of 6 July to Sir Paul Reilly (who had been on holiday in the Middle East) E G White, Director of Postal Marketing and Chairman of the SAC, summarised the general opinion reached at the meeting: While no one disputed that keeping our fine buildings was of high importance ... the most fruitful way of contributing to an appreciation of this importance was by depicting great architecture in its own right on stamps, rather than something notable by virtue of its preservation. In short, we should celebrate the strength and vitality of great buildings rather than their vulnerability ... The keynote 'Heritage' seems much closer to the SAC opinion than is 'Preservation'.

White commented that this approach was that preferred by the Post Office in its British Architecture series, which had been singled out for praise in the June edition of the magazine 'The Philatelist'; meanwhile further discussion would be deferred while background material was researched. 'The Philatelist' article, of which copies were distributed to all SAC members, had recalled the British Architecture sets and earlier issues on similar lines:

In a not untasteful way the Post Office have been despatching throughout the world, a score of silent ambassadors promoting (rather less garishly but equally effectively than certain foreign postal administrations) the attractions of Britain ... Viva the British Post Office commemorative stamp issuing policy!

On the same day as White's letter, a formal announcement of EAHY and Britain's role was made by the President of the Civic Trust, Duncan Sandys, MP. Notifying White of this in his reply the following day, Sir Paul commented:

I wish they had chosen a title more like 'European Architectural Appreciation Year' for 1975, since what we really need today is a discriminating public, not only for the old, but, in a way more importantly, for the new architecture.

White announced EAHY to the meeting of the SAC on 27 July as a subject for future examination, although little detailed discussion followed for some months. However, Sir Paul Reilly made his interest clear to the meeting on 7 September and it was agreed that the topic be researched further. Sir Paul also recommended seeing the film 'A Future for the Past', produced in collaboration by the Design Council and Civic Trust, to generate useful ideas on treatment for an eventual design brief. A showing of the film was arranged to follow the SAC meeting of 30 November.

EAHY COUNCIL SET UP

On 28 November, the Chairman of the Post Office, Sir William Ryland, received a letter from Geoffrey Rippon, Secretary of State for the Environment, advising that the United Kingdom Council of EAHY had been set up with the Duke of Edinburgh as President, Lady Dartmouth as Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Michael Middleton as Secretary General. Sir William was invited to become a member of the Council, and agreed 'reluctantly and under some pressure', according to a later memorandum. At the time he commented: 'I must say that architecture is not one of my specialisms' and indicated his belief in a note to the Managing Director (Posts), A Currall, and other Board members that the invitation had been largely because the Council wanted the Post Office to issue a stamp. In a short briefing for Sir William prepared on 5 December White stated: 'Short of a public commitment, both as Chairman of the SAC and from the standpoint of market potential, I would regard this as a subject which will deserve a set of stamps in 1975.'

After the UK Council's first meeting on 21 December, the MDP was asked to comment on the various proposals for Post Office participation that had emerged - there would be pressure for a stamp in 1975, 'possibly in consultation with other EEC countries'. In a preliminary response on 29 January 1973 White speculated that the British Trees series, of which the first was shortly to be issued, might be linked with the UK Council's advocacy of tree planting in conservation areas.

On 5 February Stuart Rose wrote to the MDP that he was 'apprehensive' about the Chairman's suggestion of consulting with other European countries about an EAHY stamp - 'our experience in the past has not shown that such a joint activity can result in a good stamp'. Currall supported this in his reply to Sir William on 15 February, explaining that, while the SAC had 'indicated a general willingness in principle ... we should be reluctant to embark on preparations for a common series of stamps. Design problems would be almost insuperable.' The same day, however, Sir William attended a meeting of the UK Council, at which he was pointedly asked by the Duke of Edinburgh whether the Post Office was going to give EAHY 'the stamp of approval'; the ensuing discussion made clear that it was thought advantageous to engage as many European nations as possible. While contriving to avoid any formal commitment, the Chairman was effectively obliged to undertake that other European countries would be approached regarding their intentions, 'and perhaps persuade them to a common cause'. In a telephone conversation with White the following day, Sir William indicated that he was aware of the disadvantage to the Post Office of surrendering its freedom of design by commitment to a standardised issue, 'nevertheless, if a number of countries were issuing stamps on the same theme, though different in their design

content, there would be advantages in having the issues at about the same time in the year'.

'EUROPEAN' CONCEPT ABANDONED

However, a 'common' European stamp had already been killed off by CEPT, the organisation of European postal and telecommunications administrations; when approached by the Council of Europe about including EAHY in its ongoing 'Europa' series, it announced in its circular of 26 January that the plans for 1974-76 were already made, and that it was thus up to individual administrations to decide on an EAHY issue as each thought fit. In March Postal Marketing wrote to all European postal administrations, including those of countries represented on neither CEPT nor the Council of Europe, suggesting that for each to produce its own designs relevant to the country would 'highlight the unique diversity of the European heritage', while a simultaneous issue date would provide the element of unity. The response was very mixed, however, and it became evident during the summer of 1973 that the Post Office, having made a conscientious effort to pursue the 'European' concept, might as well act independently.

On 5 June Michael Middleton answered a request from Stuart Rose with 'some thoughts on the possible nature' of an issue; as many of these were reflected not only in the EAHY series but other issues over a period of several years, they are worth quoting.

1. A set of British architects, planners, engineers, landscapists, either as portrait heads on their own, or backed by their work; for example

Master James of St George: Conway, Caernarvon or Harlech Castle

Inigo Jones: Banqueting House or Queen's House

Christopher Wren: St Paul's Cathedral or spires of City churches

Capability Brown: Stowe, Blenheim, Longleat, Chatsworth, and so on

James Craig: plans for the New Town of Edinburgh

Telford, Paxton or Brunel: a 19th century bridge or station.

Such a group would cover most types of structure, most of the important periods (except Gothic) and give an appropriate geographical spread.

2. An interesting set could be evolved from old prints, plans and architects' drawings ... The Royal Institute of British Architects have an unrivalled collection of drawings (the largest in existence), which would provide a marvellous source of material; the Royal Town Planning Institute have a more limited collection of old plans ... I am not thinking of vastly complicated subjects - for example, there is a tone drawing of Burlington's Assembly Rooms in York which would 'read' beautifully at stamp size ...

3. It might be worth considering the possibilities of a set based on close-up details, for example:

the glass of a cathedral window
decorative plasterwork from East Anglia
an incised memorial inscription
wood carving by Grinling Gibbons
a cast-iron balcony from Cheltenham
part of the frieze from the Albert Hall ...

This could look decorative and have a different feel from the churches and vernacular buildings of earlier sets.

On 13 July Rose confirmed in a letter to Whitney Straight, the Post Office Deputy Chairman, that it had been decided to include an EAHY issue in the 1975 programme, and that 'quite a bit has been happening on this' - as well as Michael Middleton's suggestions, several other proposals were being considered.

ARCHITECTURAL THEMES SUPPORTED BY REGIONS

The first formal moves toward the 1975 programme were taken on 12 September 1973, when regional directors were circularised for their views and told that EAHY was one of the subjects for which there were 'very strong claims'. Trevor Carpenter, Chairman of the Scottish Postal Board, replied on 21 September that the National Trust for Scotland's entries for EAHY were Edinburgh's New Town Conservation Scheme and its own 'Little Houses' Improvement Scheme; the latter had already been touched on by the 5d 'Fife Harling' stamp in the British Rural Architecture set of 1970, but the 18th century New Town was 'the first outstanding example of residential town planning in British History' and would make 'a splendid and extremely popular subject' for an EAHY series.

On 11 October D G J Wilkey, Director of the North Eastern Postal Region, suggested that 'it would be a nice thought if ... we could co-operate with the other European administrations to each deal with a separate theme, eg Italy - Renaissance; Austria - Baroque; United Kingdom - Gothic'. Next day Miss D J Fothergill, Director of the London Postal Region, reiterated a previous suggestion for 'a Stately Homes series, incorporating the appropriate heraldic designs'. In addition she proposed St Paul's, to which she gave pride of place, plus Buckingham Palace, Greenwich Observatory, and the Wallace Collection, but reluctantly conceded that these would probably have to be discounted to avoid saturating the 1975 programme with buildings. On 15 October K E F Gowen, Director of the South Western Postal Region, doubted whether EAHY would be a strong selling subject but thought Buckingham Palace (whose 150th anniversary might be linked with the Queen Mother's 75th birthday) 'well worth considering'. The following day St Paul's Cathedral was mentioned again, by A

Heaton, Chairman of the North Western Postal Board, this time in the context of the 300th anniversary of the start of its construction, although he recognised that it had appeared before (in the Battle of Britain set of 1965). G McMorran, Director of the Eastern Postal Region, replied on 19 October proposing Christchurch College, Oxford, on the pretext of the 450th anniversary of its founding, but admitted that he could not see 'a strong marketing opportunity' from it.

The most comprehensive reply was as always received from Wales and the Marches Postal Board, also on 19 October: out of 54 suggestions from head postmasters, the Post Office Users' Council for Wales and Monmouthshire and '17 appropriate authoritative bodies', over half had referred to subjects for EAHY. D J McDougall, Chairman of the Board, agreed that these be reduced to two: first, St David's Cathedral, the third to stand on the site since the 6th century and the acknowledged burial place of Wales' patron saint – 'no emphasis is needed to impress the appreciation this subject would generate in Wales if adopted' – and second, Caerphilly Castle - Wales has 'innumerable examples' of castles suitable for selection, but Caerphilly was the largest concentric castle in the world. The site had first held a Roman fort, built about 75AD.

EAHY PROPOSAL AGREED

The SAC resumed discussion on EAHY, and was told by White on 27 September that it was an 'almost inescapable' part of the 1975 programme. Its inclusion was agreed at the meeting on 25 October, when he suggested that one stamp of the set should feature St George's Chapel, Windsor, of which 1975 was the 500th anniversary (the first suggestion as a stamp issue had been made a year earlier, the first recorded mention being by White in his briefing to the Chairman of 5 December 1972). A list of other architectural anniversaries drawn up for the SAC included St Paul's Cathedral and Greenwich Observatory (both 300th) and Buckingham Palace (150th), plus Christchurch College, Oxford (450th) and Birmingham University (75th). Elsewhere on the list the National Theatre, whose official opening was anticipated in 1975, was contemplated as the subject of an issue in its own right; this proposal dated as far back as 1969, while artwork had been prepared in 1972 but never used. The issue had been bedevilled by continuous delays in the National Theatre's opening, twice postponed since 1973. The October meeting agreed that designs based on theatrical interiors should now be sought for the National Theatre issue, to avoid too many architectural themes in 1975; the suggestion by R A G Lee, one of the SAC's philatelic experts, that further architectural subjects be researched was accepted.

On 22 November Stuart Rose wrote to Sir Hugh Casson, Professor of Environmental Design at the Royal College of Art, who had expressed an interest in an EAHY stamp issue the previous July: 'I wonder ... if you would be prepared to do some drawings and indeed design

the stamps? If you would then perhaps I could come and talk about it with you.' Sir Hugh responded with alacrity, 'What a bombshell of an honour!'; a meeting took place on 11 December. Although offered a formal commission to produce four designs, Sir Hugh did not at once agree but suggested a further meeting to discuss 'a design proposal which would be mine as an idea, but I think not mine as an executant'. Sadly there are no clues as to what this idea was apart from a further letter on 11 January 1974: 'I saw Dick Guyatt with the book yesterday, and he is having some of the illustrations that we discussed photo-reduced to study the effect.' (Richard Guyatt was a colleague of both Stuart Rose as an SAC member since 1963 and a designer of stamps and postal stationery, and of Sir Hugh as Professor of Graphic Design at the RCA.)

NATIONAL THEATRE MERGED INTO EAHY

Stuart Rose succeeded in deferring any decision on either the EAHY or National Theatre issues into the New Year, largely because he and Sir Paul Reilly were unhappy with the idea that the latter should consist of theatrical interiors - both felt that the new theatre's most important feature was its exterior. At the SAC meeting of 16 January 1974 both supported a suggestion by Sir Brian Batsford that the two issues be merged into one; this was agreed to relieve pressure on that part of the 1975 programme as yet undecided, for which there were several proposals. No subjects were agreed for the EAHY issue other than St George's Chapel, Windsor, and the new National Theatre building, although Sir Paul's suggestion was adopted that the issue should comprise five values and thus cover the five main periods of architecture - Romanesque, Gothic, Classical, Victorian and Modern.

White recommended the EAHY set to the MDP the following day as part of the 1975 programme, which Currall submitted to a meeting of the Post Office Management Board on 18 February. A side-effect of the SAC's decision was that the plans for the issue as explored by Stuart Rose and Sir Hugh Casson were 'completely upset'; Rose explained in a letter to Sir Hugh that 'we have been embarrassed by too many requests for architectural stamps which would be difficult to refuse', hence the compromise over the form the issue should take - 'it is I think essential to find a common graphics denominator for the set, even though it may now have little to do with EAHY'. Sir Hugh was invited to offer fresh thoughts about the set, but seems to have taken no subsequent interest; in 1980, however, he designed the London Landmarks architectural set.

ANSWERS TO PO BOARD CRITICISM

The Board expressed alarm at some details of the proposed programme on 18 February, which was duly reported by White to the next SAC meeting on 27 February. The concern was

the doubt 'whether the new National Theatre belonged in a series commemorating the European Architectural Heritage and whether the design was of architectural merit and reasonably non-controversial'. The SAC stood its ground: the Board was reminded it had been recognised in 1971, and reaffirmed several times since, that the new theatre's opening justified a stamp issue. The anticipated opening in 1975 made it possible to combine recognition of the event with the inclusion of an appropriate modern building in the EAHY set. Stuart Rose could think of no alternative modern building of sufficient importance to justify excluding the National Theatre, while other SAC members supported the comment by Dr Herbert Spencer, Senior Research Fellow at the RCA, that it was 'almost a contradiction to expect a new building to be both of architectural merit and non-controversial'.

It was also pointed out that 'Theatre - an important element of British art and culture' had featured in only two previous stamp issues, the Shakespeare set of 1964 and the two stamps depicting court masques in the Inigo Jones series of 1973. Another argument was that, although there had never been a public commitment to a stamp for the opening of the National Theatre, intermittent contacts with its administrators over the past few years might well have led them to assume that such an issue was inevitable: 'were they to be disappointed then we might expect representations from the present Chairman, Sir Max Rayne, the Director Peter Hall and the Associate Director Sir Laurence Olivier as well as other distinguished and vocal people in the theatre world'.

An equally firm response was made to a proposal from the Board, and known to be favoured by the Prime Minister Edward Heath, that the 500th anniversary of Michaelangelo's birth be commemorated; it was suggested that one way of doing this was to incorporate a building designed by Michaelangelo in the EAHY issue. The SAC was strongly and unanimously in favour of maintaining the 'consistent practice of choosing events and anniversaries having a direct relationship to British affairs or people', and felt that Michaelangelo did not fall into this category. There was also the argument that the only one of Michaelangelo's various architectural works in Florence and Rome known to the general public was the dome of St Peter's Church in Rome; to commemorate this in the same year as the 300th anniversary of the start of reconstruction of Sir Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral 'would call for a strong and explicit justification in answer to inevitable criticism on aesthetic and denominational grounds'.

These views were presented to the MDP by White on 1 March, and supported by Currall when presented to the Post Office Chairman and the Board at its meeting on 4 March. The SAC's views were accepted on both counts. White confirmed this at the SAC meeting on 21 March, and said that it was hoped to issue the EAHY stamps in April 1975. The MDP reiterated this to the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications on 29 March. Earlier it had been intended to issue the EAHY stamps in June, to mark the original foundation of St George's Chapel as closely as possible, while the Turner bicentenary had been scheduled for April to coincide

with the artist's birth date; the cancellation of a proposed 'Winter Sports' issue made it possible to move the Turner issue to February and free April 1975 for the EAHY set to coincide with the planned opening of the National Theatre.

FIRST DESIGNS COMMISSIONED

Immediately after the Board's decision, Stuart Rose approached Peter Gauld, from whom EAHY designs were formally commissioned on 26 March. These were still undergoing development when Rose showed a set to the SAC meeting of 5 June; after discussion, it was agreed that another artist should be invited to explore an alternative approach, and a commission was given to Ronald Maddox on 18 June. On 17 July two sets of four designs each by Gauld and a preliminary set of six by Maddox were seen by the SAC; these were as follows:

Gauld

Charlotte Square, Edinburgh
Blair Castle, Scotland
Tower of London
Powis Castle, Montgomery
St George's Chapel, Windsor
The Rows, Chester
Royal Observatory, Greenwich
National Theatre.

Maddox

Lyme Regis, Dorset
Port Isaac, Cornwall
Cowes, Isle of Wight
Solva, Pembrokeshire
Hambleton Mill, Buckinghamshire
Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire.

Gauld's designs were 160mm across by 110mm down, included the Queen's head, and all appear to have been in the 5p value; Maddox's designs were 105mm across by 87mm down and included neither values nor the Queen's head. They did, however, include considerably more detailed captions than would have been suitable for reproduction in stamp size. Maddox also supplied 25 stamp size sketches including the Queen's head and in a range of values; these were not described, although three depict the National Theatre.

Although the work of both designers was liked, it was decided to develop the following designs by Peter Gauld: St George's Chapel, Windsor; Royal Greenwich Observatory; National

Theatre; Blair Castle; The Rows, Chester. However, in a letter to the Scottish Postal Board on 26 July, M D Blacklock of the National Trust for Scotland reiterated a suggestion that the EAHY issue should depict the United Kingdom's four named 'pilot projects'. These were the Trust's own 'Little Houses' improvement scheme, the Edinburgh New Town Conservation Scheme, and conservation projects for the city of Chester and Poole, Dorset.

FINAL CHOICE OF SUBJECTS

It was possibly as a result it was decided to replace Peter Gauld's Blair Castle design with that of Charlotte Square in Edinburgh's New Town. St George's Chapel and the National Theatre were still regarded as the only 'essentials' as late as the end of April. It appears that Gauld was asked to include the Royal Greenwich Observatory among his subjects after 10 June when Basil Greenhill, Director of the National Maritime Museum, made a direct appeal to the MDP (the building, Flamsteed House in Greenwich Park, which had housed the observatory until its move to Sussex, was now an integral part of the museum). Although listed as a possible subject by the London Postal Region the previous October, it does not seem to have been considered as part of the issue prior to Greenhill's letter, but was announced along with the National Theatre and St George's Chapel in a press release of 13 August. There was no public announcement of the Edinburgh or Chester stamps until the following March. It is not recorded whether Gauld's Chester Rows design was singled out because of Chester's status as an EAHY 'pilot project' area: the artist was later reported, by J R Berry of Postal Marketing in correspondence with the head postmaster of Chester on 19 February 1975, as saying his reasons for selecting Chester were because he liked the town and because it contained some good examples of black-and-white architecture.

Stuart Rose and Peter Gauld visited the National Theatre's architect, Denys Lasdun, in early August to show the design as it stood and agree 'certain corrections and modifications' to ensure greater accuracy. Lasdun supplied photographs of the front elevation of the building (from a model) and also of the completed part of the building with a background of the Thames and St Paul's Cathedral. On 4 September Gauld visited the National Trust for Scotland in Edinburgh: he later recorded that Charlotte Square was his personal choice of subject from the New Town area. This presumably gratified the Trust, as its own offices were in Charlotte Square.

On 12 September the SAC confirmed that Blair Castle in Peter Gauld's set should be replaced by Charlotte Square. 23 April was accepted as a suitable day of issue for the stamps, it being St George's Day (the Queen would be attending a special service in St George's Chapel) and Shakespeare's birthday (and hence the official opening day of the National Theatre, which the Queen also hoped to attend - a month later, however, this was

postponed again and the opening did not finally take place until March 1976). After general discussion on the matching of stamps to values, the meeting agreed the following:

4½p - Charlotte Square, Edinburgh

5½p - The Rows, Chester

6½p - Royal Greenwich Observatory

8p - St George's Chapel, Windsor

10p - National Theatre.

In a letter of explanation to the Scottish Postal Board, which had hoped the Edinburgh stamp would be a higher value, 'we believe we could make a lot of money from this'. Some of the reasoning behind the allocation was explained:

The Edinburgh stamp is thought to be the most striking in the set and we try, all other factors being equal, to make the most successful design the basic rate stamp so that it will be seen by most people ... The stamp for St George's Chapel Windsor is included in the set because 1975 is the 500th year of its foundation ... and we anticipate that we might be able to achieve a high overseas sale to American visitors to Windsor and London ... We intend therefore to make the Windsor stamp the zone B rate [for airmail to the USA]. (David Burn, Postal Marketing, to J R Hall, Controller Operations and Marketing, Scottish Postal Board, 22 October 1974.)

FIRST ESSAYS RECEIVED

The first essays were sent by the printers Harrison & Sons Ltd on 1 October. A further set was sent on 23 October, featuring the National Theatre, Chester Rows, Charlotte Square and the Royal Observatory.

The SAC saw these the following day plus a revised drawing of St George's Chapel, Windsor, all with the Queen's head in a metallic colour. It was pointed out that the head on the new drawing would have to be transposed with the value to maintain consistency. Anthony Lousada queried the treatment of perspective on some of the designs; Rose replied that Gauld had followed an accepted stylistic convention by ignoring perspective in favour of a 'folded out' drawing of each building. R A G Lee thought the lettering was 'rather rough', to which R F York replied on behalf of Harrisons, the stamp printers, that both lettering and numerals would be printed in intaglio. It was agreed that Gauld should be asked to reconsider the pink background and shading on the National Theatre design.

All five designs were returned to Gauld on 25 October for the modifications to St George's Chapel and the National Theatre and insertion of values as agreed on 12 September. On 30 October Stuart Rose sent the revised artwork back to Harrisons with the accompanying comments:

1. In order to get the 5½p value into the space he has in fact slightly increased the area which means you will have to make a minute reduction overall. The value however should remain the same size as the others.
 2. There is a slight difference between the three fractions in the 4½p, 5½p and 6½p, would you please, therefore, use the ½ and the 'p' from the 6½p for all three.
-

PRICE INCREASE AND SE-TENANT STRIP

During November it was reluctantly decided by Postal Marketing that two stamps of the EAHY set would be issued se-tenant at the basic inland first class rate, 'to soften the blow of the effect of a possible tariff increase on the total price', although D W Barker of Postal Marketing suspected that collectors might be more annoyed by the se-tenant stamps than an extra penny on the price. On 6 December Harrisons supplied new essays, with the Chester Rows and Charlotte Square horizontally se-tenant:

5½p Charlotte Square / Chester Rows (se-tenant)

6½p Royal Observatory

8p St George's Chapel

10p National Theatre.

The essays were approved by the SAC on 12 December; York of Harrisons was asked the following day to change the values on the se-tenant strip to 4½p, and on the Royal Observatory design to 5½p. One of each of the essays was submitted for analysis to the Post Office chemists; P J Mann confirmed on 19 December 'that for the purpose of coding with facing phosphor the designs are suitable for either overall coated or overall printed phosphor'.

Essays in the amended values were supplied on 10 January 1975.

White forwarded a set of these the same day to the MDP; Currall submitted them on 14 January to the Department of Industry, whose Secretary of State, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, was now the minister responsible for the Post Office. The Queen's approval was given on 21 January and the MDP was notified on 24 January.

On 28 January essays of each value were sent to the Supplies Division for checking against proof sheets of the stamps when these came to hand, while a similar set was returned to Harrisons with instructions that the stamps be printed with the value of the 4½p pair changed to 7p, the 5½p to 8p, the 8p to 10p, and the 10p to 12p. This was in line with new tariff increases in course of agreement with the Post Office Users' National Council and the Price Commission, which were made public in February and came into effect on 17 March.

STAMPS IN PRODUCTION

The only incident of note in the subsequent production of the stamps arose on 5 February; a memorandum reports an anomaly noticed by the Supplies Division in checking proof sheets of the 7p:

Charlotte Sq. design now shows a stretch of 'pavement' extending below the railings - has effect of bringing lower margin of this stamp in line with that of 'The Rows'. Asked if the final essays had been revised, Stuart Rose knew nothing of this and asked to see sheets... Proof sheets shown to Stuart Rose - quite content with slight change (6/2/75).

At the end of March White asked in his capacity as Director of Postal Marketing whether the se-tenant stamps could have been arranged in a 'chequerboard' fashion 'to increase philatelic interest' instead of the orthodox linear style as was in fact used. David Burn thought 'a counter officer in Edinburgh would find it difficult to detach ten Edinburgh stamps from a 7p sheet arranged in a chequerboard layout'. W Rae of Postal Operations writing on 4 April was forthright in his opinions:

There is no operational objection to se-tenant ... I should imagine they stimulate higher sales. But there is objection to a chequerboard arrangement ... In this case, tourists in Chester or Edinburgh will probably wish to buy only the stamps of the city they are visiting ... Can you imagine the time involved by counter staff in tearing out 50 stamps for postcards? Have you considered the possibility of an imbalance in sales at Chester and Edinburgh?

On 15 April the Philatelic Bureau reported 'a curious phenomenon' affecting the 10p stamp - in many cases the 10p on stamped first day covers received from the Supplies Division was 'bubbling', that is, not affixing evenly to the surface of the envelope. Even after being notified of this Supplies was unable to make any improvement. Attempting to make up its own covers, the Bureau's staff 'immediately found that even with the greatest of care that the 10p stamp bubbled in our hands'. There is unfortunately no sequel recorded to this report.

EAHY ISSUE RELEASED

The stamps were issued on 23 April, in sheets of 100 on unwatermarked paper with 'all-over' phosphor. The Queen's head on all values was in gold, other colours being: red-brown, lavender, greenish yellow, bright orange, new blue, grey-black (7p); magenta, pale

magenta, deep slate, light yellow-olive, grey-black (8p); greenish yellow, bistre-brown, deep slate, emerald-green, grey-black (10p); pale magenta, new blue, grey-black (12p). Both 7p stamps shared the same colours except there was no lavender (also described as 'dull violet') used for the Chester Rows stamp. The 12p EAHY stamp was the first of that value to be issued as there was no 12p definitive until 1980. The stamps were withdrawn from ordinary counters after two months and from philatelic counters after a year; final sales were reported as 40,950,000 of the 7p, 6,640,000 of the 8p, 5,560,000 of the 10p and 5,450,000 of the 12p. Separate sales figures for the two 7p stamps are not available. There were 51,000 sets of PHQ cards issued, comprising PHQ10(a) featuring the Charlotte Square stamp, 10(b) featuring the Chester Rows and 10(c) the Royal Observatory.

Details of fee payments to the artists are not recorded; presumably these were the standard fee of £150 for each submitted design, with an additional £150 for each design accepted. Gauld was also paid £75 for designing the first day envelope and filler card and £115 for the presentation pack; these were formally commissioned on 18 December 1974. The architectural and environmental journalist Tony Aldous was commissioned on 12 September 1974 to write the text for the pack and envelope filler, and was paid £50. Gauld was also commissioned to design a pictorial first day of issue handstamp for the Philatelic Bureau for a fee of £25, with the proviso that 'any shape of handstamp is acceptable provided it can be inscribed within maximum rectangular measurements of ... 33mm x 57mm'. In the event he designed a circular postmark incorporating Gothic and Renaissance decorative motifs later used by the Victorians, which was approved at the end of January 1975.

HANDSTAMPS AND OTHER POSTMARKS

As well as the special Philatelic Bureau postmark, several other special handstamps were available on 23 April, all with their own covers and posting box facilities. These included: '500 Years St George's Chapel' at Windsor, which was also available with a 'Carried by Coach' cachet; 'European Architectural Heritage Year' from the Georgian House, the National Trust for Scotland's office in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh; 'Corinium 1900 Heritage', from Cirencester; 'Chester Heritage City', from Chester Town Hall, 23-26 April. Other special handstamps unrelated to the issue but also available on 23 April were 'Wilton House Open Day Wilton Salisbury', 'Opening of Meriden Junior School Pool' in Watford, and 'The Oldest Post Office in Britain 1763' from Sanquhar in Fifeshire. A special handstamp was also available from the post office counter at the European Architectural Heritage Year Spring Flower Festival, Valley Gardens, Harrogate, during 24-26 April. A 'Chester Heritage City' slogan postmark was provided on two dies from 3 March to 1 September, while Leicester used 'European Architectural Heritage Year 1975' on five dies between 23 April and 17 June, also in use at Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough

for limited periods during those dates. The normal first day of issue handstamps were available from most large post offices including Chester, Edinburgh, Windsor and London SE1 (for the Royal Observatory and National Theatre). Ordinary circular datestamps from Greenwich Branch Office London SE10 and Windsor Castle were applicable, as was that for Dartmouth Row, Greenwich SE10.

The stamps were generally well received; it was reported on 14 February that the National Trust for Scotland was 'delighted' by the Charlotte Square stamp, while Lady Dartmouth wrote to Sir William Ryland on 13 May: 'The stamps are absolutely fabulous, and form a wonderful contribution to the Year, for which we are all very grateful.' The Post Office's other main contribution was the exhibition 'British Architecture on Stamps' held by the National Postal Museum from 8 May to the end of July; this showed used and unused designs featuring architecture, for EAHY and sundry previous issues dating back to 1935, as well as a selection of archive photographs portraying changing fashions in Post Office architecture over the previous century.

FURTHER NOTES ON THE STAMPS

Charlotte Square (7p)

The Square was designed by Robert Adam in 1791; only the north side was built before his death the following year; the remainder was completed by Sir Robert Reid in 1814-15. In 1975 the north side included the official residence of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the headquarters of the National Trust for Scotland; St George's Church on the west side had recently been saved from dry rot by the Department of the Environment and was now an annexe of the Scots national archives.

The Rows, Chester (7p)

Peter Gauld had known Chester and the Rows, its two-storey shopping streets, for 30 years. He originally included them as an example of mediaeval domestic architecture in the 'black-and-white' style, ie timber and plaster; the majority of the Rows however are very accurate 19th century copies (sometimes wrongly called 'mock Tudor') in which the timber is only nailed in place and does not support the structure. Gauld nevertheless admired the uncharacteristically sensitive way in which the Victorians had preserved the building style. The building depicted on the stamp was a Victorian restoration at the end of Eastgate Street.

Royal Observatory (8p)

The 'old' Royal Observatory was actually a house built by Sir Christopher Wren in 1675-76 for the first Astronomer Royal, the Reverend John Flamsteed, at the order of Charles II. Wren explained that Flamsteed House was built 'for the Observator's habitation and a little for

Pompe'; most astronomical observations were conducted from a nearby hut. In 1975 the house held the National Maritime Museum's display on the history of navigational astronomy. Gauld commented that it was the only one of his designs to show an entire building.

St George's Chapel (10p)

The present Chapel was begun in 1475 on the orders of Edward IV; the original architects were the royal master masons Henry Janyns and William Vertue. In the late 1920s alarming cracks in the stonework led to the discovery that the whole building rested on acutely insecure foundations, and it was closed for ten years while comprehensive repairs and restoration took place. An earlier chapel on the same site within the grounds of Windsor Castle was used by Edward III to accommodate his newly founded Order of the Garter - the association continues until the present day.

National Theatre (12p)

Plans for a National Theatre can be traced as far back as 1848; the National Theatre company was formally founded in 1963, although its direct antecedents date from 1946. The creation of a suitable building was more problematical; foundation stones were laid at least twice in different places before the site finally used, a location then known as Princes Meadow on the South Bank, was chosen and work began on 3 November 1969. After several postponements the new building finally opened on 16 March 1976 with a production of 'Hamlet' in the Lyttleton, one of the theatre's three auditoria. Of the 53 EAHY stamps produced by 15 postal administrations, this was the only one to feature contemporary architecture.

The artist, Peter Gauld, was born in Coalville, Leicestershire in 1925 and studied painting and graphic design at Leicester School of Art. In 1951 he became Art Editor of Unilever's Information Division, where he was involved in every aspect of publicity design - magazines, booklets, company reports, packaging, advertising, exhibition design and illustration. From 1963 to 1965 he was Art Director of Curwen Press, after which he concentrated full time on his freelance design practice. His successful designs for the Post Office apart from the EAHY issue include the POSB 2½d of 1961, the COMPAC issue of 1963, the Lister Centenary 4d of 1965, the British Architecture set on cathedrals in 1969, the British Conductors set of 1980 and Christmas air letters in 1968 and 1977.

GILES ALLEN
25 June 1996

REFERENCES

British Postal Museum & Archives files:

- Post 54 SAC minutes, 1973-75
- MKD/BS/564 (EAHY stamps -correspondence)
- MKD/BS/565 (EAHY stamps - instructions to artists)
- MKD/BS/705 (EAHY stamps - submission to HM Queen)
- MKD/BS/845 (1975 stamp programme - Press & Broadcast Notice information)
- MKD/BS/1027 (1975 special stamps - submission to MDP and Board)
- MKD/BS/1028 (1975 special stamps - regional correspondence)
- MKD/BS/1029 (1975 special stamps - background research)
- MKD/BS/1030 (1975 stamp programme announcement)
- MKD/CJ/206 (EAHY - promotion and stamp design)
- SY/JJ/175 (EAHY - PO participation)

Press & Broadcast Notices:

- McD 45, 11 March 1975;
- McD 80, 8 May 1975

British Philatelic Bulletin:

- Peter Gauld, 'European Architectural Heritage Year Postage Stamps', vol. 12, no. 9, pp. 6-7
- Jean Farrugia, 'British Architecture on Stamps', vol. 12, no. 10, pp. 4-5
- James Watson, 'British Special Stamps 101 - European Architectural Heritage Year, 1975', vol. 20, no. 11, pp. 159-160
- also
- vol. 12, no. 8, pp. 5-11;
- vol. 13, no. 5, pp. 8-9

Books:

- N C Porter, 'Collecting British First Day Covers'
- A Roberts, 'Collect Post Office Cards'
- Parsons, Peachey & Pearson, 'Slogan Postmarks of the Seventies'
- George R Pearson, 'Special Event Postmarks of the United Kingdom'
- Stanley Gibbons Specialised Great Britain Stamp Catalogue, Volume 5 Queen Elizabeth II Decimal Special Issues. Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd