

The Preparation of the Silver Jubilee Issue: Part 2



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

My first article (*Philatelic Bulletin*, June 1971) ended at the point where Barnett Freedman's upright design had been provisionally selected and he had been asked to submit a further design in a horizontal format.

The Selection of the Final Design

By early November 1934 this new design was ready, and on the 19th of that month Harrison submitted four different types of essays for consideration by King George V. These comprised, firstly, the original "upright" Freedman design in two sizes, described officially as "Australian" size (i.e. the dimensions of the King George V definitives of 1915-36) and "label" size. Secondly, there were essays of Freedman's new horizontal design using alternatively both the "Vandyke" portrait head (as used for the upright design) and the "Mackennal" head then in use on the definitives. These essays of the horizontal design exist in two forms - with medium and large size head (see Figs. 7-10). All the essays are of the $1\frac{1}{2}d$ value only but, since it had been decided

that the issued set would consist of $\frac{1}{2}d$, $1d$, $1\frac{1}{2}d$, and $2\frac{1}{2}d$ values, most were printed in the four colours of the corresponding definitives, plus an alternative shade of blue officially described as turquoise (see Fig. 11). When the various essays were submitted to him at the end of November, King George selected the horizontal Freedman design with the small size Mackennal head.

The next three months were spent in preparing further essays (of the $1\frac{1}{2}d$ value) each embodying slight modifications of the original design, such as dark outlining of the pale sectors of the crown and wreath, and minor changes in lettering and shading. There is also a series of five colour trials of the $1\frac{1}{2}d$ in varying shades of brown in the National Postal Museum (Fig. 12) though no comparable colour trials appear to have been made for the other values. The final (imperforate) proof for this value was approved on 5 January 1934. By 28 March modified final essays for each of the other three values were ready and approved by the Post Office.

On 23 April, two weeks before the Jubilee set



Fig. 11

Fig. 12



Fig. 13

was issued to the public, special sets of the four values mounted on a card $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5$ " were presented to the members of the Cabinet.

The 2½d Prussian Blue

The first proof (17 January 1935) of the 2½d design was struck in the turquoise shade mentioned above, but although this was the shade preferred by the artist, the King decided that the stamp should be issued in the ultramarine shade of the definitive 2½d. As it happened, when the printers proofed the issue in complete imperforate sheets (for final approval and registration of the imprimatur sheet) the 2½d sheets were printed in the rejected turquoise shade. The mistake was quickly noticed and some half-dozen new sheets were printed in the correct colour (one of these is the imperforate imprimatur sheet dated 7 April 1935 now in the Museum collection). After the selection of the imprimatur sheet it is normal practice for the other (duplicate) proof sheets to be perforated and issued in the normal way. By mistake the rejected "turquoise" sheets were also perforated and issued and these stamps are the errors of colour known

to philatelists as "Prussian blue" (S.G. 456a).

The Stamp Books

In conclusion, a very brief word about the stamp books. The Silver Jubilee and the 1929 PUC Stamps are the only commemorative issues to have been used in stamp books. The decision to do so for the Jubilee issue was taken as early as June 1934.

A particularly attractive special cover was designed (the first such), probably by Barnett Freedman (see Fig. 13). Only the three low values of the set were used for the books and though these books were larger than normal they could still only accommodate panes of four stamps, without any advertising. Harrisons prepared special booklet sheets in a unique layout six stamps wide – a pane 4 stamps wide of which the first and second pairs are *tête-bêche*, then a wide gutter, then a pane two stamps wide – which produced three booklet panes from each two rows of the sheet. One of these special sheets (and the complete stamp books) are on show at present in the Museum's current "80 Years of Stamps Books" Exhibition.