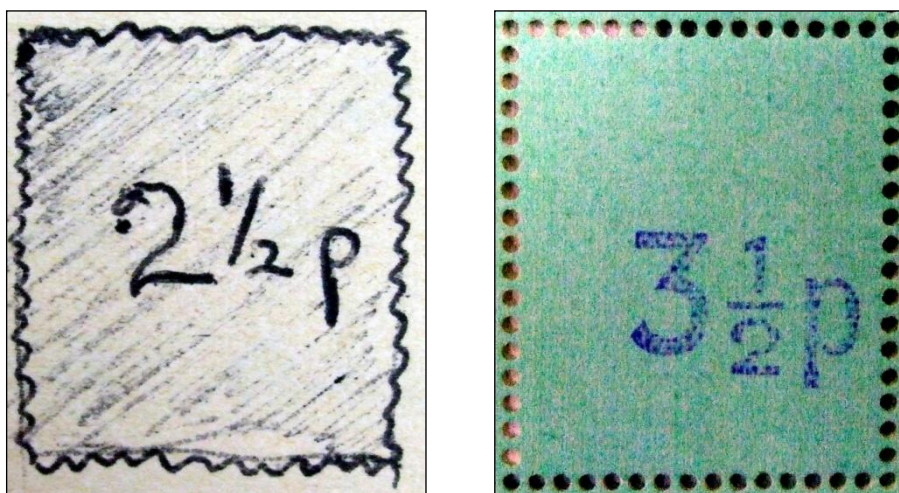


1970: Decimal Currency Training Labels

Glenn H Morgan FRPSL

The prospect of decimalisation in the United Kingdom, effective from 15 February 1971 while in the middle of a massive national postal strike, saw a need on the part of the Post Office to prepare its staff for the changeover by training them in the use of the new currency.

To assist in this effort, special internal training labels were produced in the values of 2p, 2 1/2 p, 3p, 3 1/2p and 4p. Why these particular values only were chosen is not recorded, as twelve values appear to have been originally envisaged.



Original pencil sketch and unadopted specimen design on pale green perforated paper with individually applied handstamp of the face value, purely as a mock-up
(Images courtesy BPMA)



The five values of issued training labels

Training Label Orders in BPMA Files

POST 52/1028	Decimal Training Material (Part One) <i>This file contains 'dummy' stamp items used for training in the new currency. There are delivery notes, and lists of the districts where the supplies were sent to.</i>	1970
POST 52/1029	Decimal Training Material (Part Two) <i>Nearly the whole file contains printed sheets of coloured yellow paper filled in by hand with the names of the Post Offices and the supply each had for training purposes. There are also some requisition sheets. The list of towns is by region, then alphabetical by town, (in most cases).</i>	1970
POST 52/1030	Decimal Training Material (Part Three) <i>A small file of correspondence which covers the problems experienced in the supply of postal items for training purposes. There are Delivery notes, lists of figures for stamps and cancelled Giro cheques.</i>	1970-1972

<u>Order / Date</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Supplied to</u>	<u>Order Value</u>
I. March 1970	55,000 sheets of 200	Training Division and Decimalisation Officers	Not on file

A file note dated 12 February 1970 confirmed that the values could be white or black “whatever is easiest” and that marginal sheet arrows were not required. The Post Office would also not be too concerned if the expected issued stamp colours changed before D-Day, making the training labels incorrectly coloured. The green specimens of the 3 1/2p value (see above image) were produced by hand to indicate what the issued training labels might look like.

An undated file note (probably March 1970) confirms thinking at that time. It shows that the face values were to be the five actually issued, that sheets were to be of 200 labels (“200 set, as for decimal stamps”) and that the paper used should be “coated, PVA gummed as for ordinary stamps so that they feel, fold and tear like the genuine item”.

The design was sketched on the file note (see above image) and stated “background tint of similar colour to actual decimal stamps. Value in black or solid colour of tint if it stands out well enough. White gutters not necessary if it is easier to print without them. A rough commercial job will suffice.” Needless to say, Harrison did a much better job than that!

Quantities to be produced amounted to a massive 55,000 sheets of each value, with 5,000 sheets being delivered by 1 June 1970 to the Training Division at PHQ and the balance by 1 September for distribution to the Decimalisation Officer at each Head and District Office.

A note from Supplies Division to Contracts Division dated 20 March 1970 indicated the reason why these training labels were really produced. It transpires that the decimal unified stamps would not be ready by the time that decimal training was due to commence.



Bibliography

No specific articles about these training labels have been traced. Snippets abound, but add nothing new to the story.

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SD 1209
(BRIDGING DECIMAL)

1772
1773

EXTRACT FROM - POSTAGE REQUISITION SUPPLEMENTARY -

Office:- GRIMSBY LINC'S ^{hw}

Code

DECIMAL TRAINING STAMPS

Item	Price per sheet or packet etc	No. of sheets or packets etc.	Value £
2p	✓	210	/
2½p	✓	210	
3p	✓	210	
3½p	✓	210	
4p	✓	210	
Total Debit Postage Stamps			

The Postmaster, *g*

The above items are sent herewith. Their value should be entered forthwith in the appropriate space in the Cash Book for the actual day on which the supply is received.


To PLEASE RECEIPT AND RETURN TO
Purchasing & Supply Department,
Supplies Division,
Hemel Hempstead,
Herts.

Supply checked at)
Office of receipt) Initials *RP*
and found correct) Date *26 Aug 70*

G.M. PUNNETT
Controller.

Date of despatch

This invoice should be carefully filed by the Postmaster.



Typical order for 210 sheets of each value of label, as requested by Grimsby
(Image courtesy BPMA)

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