

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATES OF JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF POSTAL ADMINISTRATION

by Glenn H. Morgan.

With a burst of publicity a new stamp issuing authority, represented at the UPU by the British Post Office, was launched on 1st October 1969. With an imposing title of The States of Jersey Department of Postal Administration her issues have been well documented in various stamp catalogues. The purpose of this article is to set out the lead-up to vesting day.

The chance to become an independent postal authority arose due to the General Post Office deciding to become a Public Corporation. The option was therefore given to Jersey and Guernsey to 'go it alone' postally, with the stipulation that both islands must reach the same decision before Her Majesties' Government would sanction a take-over.

A team of London based management consultants were called in to assess the viability of the proposition, a stiff deadline being set for an answer. After many computations on 23rd January 1968 Jersey took the decision to go postally independent. Guernsey also reached this decision.

The following month a notice was issued in connection with the forthcoming stamps: "It will take some time to produce an issue which will comprise of a dozen or so values. The first priority is to approve a theme for the design of the stamps in the issue and members of the public are invited to submit ideas for such a theme. The ideas need only be in writing, (e.g. the islands bays), though sketch illustrations of a theme will be considered. A theme will be selected which represents pictorially aspects of the island." A deadline of 14th February 1968 was set.

Roughly 70 Jersey residents submitted designs and ideas, many of which were considered useful, and so an artist was commissioned to put these ideas down on paper. Vesting Day at this time was expected to be 1st April 1969, giving a little over a year to prepare everything.

The studio of Victor Whiteley, London was asked to prepare four designs for a ½d value. The artwork was to include the word Jersey, bear the Royal Portrait and the Jersey crest. One design was to be based on the then current 1c stamp of the Bahamas, another was to have a separate right hand panel bearing the Queen's portrait and value. The final two designs were left to the discretion of the designer. These were submitted but not approved.

Various postcards, photographs and travel brochures were sent to Mr Whiteley to assist him in preparing roughs and he was called to Jersey to find the true wishes of the Administration. Tourism was considered preferable to displaying the

agricultural resources of Jersey, although the Jersey cow and States' Chamber were to be included in the set.

At this meeting it was decided that the best printing process available was to be used and so Jersey officials visited various United Kingdom security printers to learn the art of stamp printing. They also visited the newly established Maltese Philatelic Bureau to see how they operated. Provisional values were chosen at this juncture.

Victor Whiteley suggested that a decorative panel be used, each stamp having its own distinctive colour in order to help postal clerks who often experienced difficulty in identifying values in multi-coloured designs, especially under artificial lighting conditions. This had worked successfully on the Norfolk Island definitive series that he had designed.

This idea was accepted and various aspects of marine life were chosen including shells, lobster pots, seagulls, crabs, seaweed and a fishing boat. The legend 'Jersey', value, crest and Royal portrait were all incorporated onto this panel.

Now that the basic format had been decided upon work commenced on the preparation of a set of roughs.

In the meantime Her Majesty the Queen had consented to sit for a photograph to be used on the £1 value. Mr. (Later to become Sir) Cecil Beaton the renowned photographer was nominated by Her Majesty following a request that had been submitted through the Lieutenant Governor. A statement made to the States Assembly by the Postal Committee. President read: "As the Assembly is aware, it has always been the intention of the Postal Committee that subject to the necessary permission being forthcoming, the Jersey stamps to be issued after the take-over by the States of the Postal Services should include a reproduction of the head of Her Majesty the Queen. We are sure that not only the Assembly but the people of Jersey share in the pleasure and pride of the Committee that Her Majesty should accord such recognition to these, Her islands."

The Beaton portrait was not available at the time of submitting the roughs, and so the Arnold Machin portrait was used as a temporary expedient.

Various changes were made during the design stage, some of which were:

½d: Originally this value was to have shown the Jersey crest. Later, however, a simple view of Elizabeth Castle was chosen. This was subsequently amended to show a view of the castle surrounded by water and forming a yachting scene.

1d: Originally to have shown the Royal portrait, (as eventually used on the 1s 9d value), but later La Hougue Bie was chosen. Incidentally, some of the trees surrounding the tomb were omitted as prominence to the mound was considered preferable to the chapel.

1½d: Envisaged at first but later dropped. It was to have shown yachting at Elizabeth Castle.

2d: Originally to have shown a band playing in Royal Square, St. Helier. This design was subsequently omitted, but not before Mr. Whiteley had been asked to prepare a second design giving less prominence to the band and more to the Square.

3d: Originally to have shown La Hougue Bie. This value replaced the *1½d* one.

4d: Originally to have shown La Corbiere lighthouse by day, then Gorey Castle by night. This was subsequently amended to read Mont Orgueil Castle by night.

5d: Originally to have shown Gorey Castle by night. This was subsequently amended to the Jersey crest, the lions on which were altered so as to depict their mane and have their mouths open.

6d: Originally photographs and transparencies were used to prepare this value but the results were considered to be too unnatural, a drawing being considered preferable. Incidentally, Mr Whiteley had the assistance of Postal Committee member Senator P. Romeril in designing this value.

9d: Accuracy on the map design was considered essential and so Guernsey, Alderney and Sark were to be shown but not named.

1s: Originally to have shown Portelet Bay, then Gorey Castle by day, this subsequently being amended to read Mont Orgueil Castle by day.

1s 6d: Originally to have shown an aircraft at Jersey airport.

1s 9d: Not envisaged at first. Originally to have shown Gorey Castle by day.

2. 6d: Originally to have shown a map of Jersey in relation to the coasts of England and France. The eventual design of a British European Airways Vanguard aircraft at Jersey airport was amended to the newly introduced Trident. The wording Jersey Airport was originally placed in the left hand corner of the vignette, this being subsequently amended to the top left hand corner.

The stamp size of the set was to be 1.1 inches by 1.75 inches for the values to 2s 6d, and 1.25 inches by 1.9 inches for the 5s, 10s and £1 values. Eventually, however, the 2s 6d value was also produced in the larger size.

The final artwork was prepared and submitted. However, even at this late stage it was decided to use a second study of Her Majesty which showed her smiling and more at ease. Also, where inverted commas had been used on some values these were now removed. The designs were then submitted to the Palace for Royal approval.

The British firm of Harrison and Sons Limited won the tender for printing the values to 1s 9d, the high value contract going to the Swiss firm of Helio Courvoisier S.A. They were both now able to commence production of the stamps.

Meanwhile whilst work on the definitive issues was underway representatives from the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau visited Jersey to discuss with island officials their appointments as agents for handling the new stamps. In May 1968 they were appointed and at the time Senator Krichefski said:

"The Crown Agents will be responsible for the preparation, printing and distribution of Jersey stamps and we have also made them our sole agent for all parts of the world with the exception of the North American market."

Douglas Stacey, (the Head of the Stamp Division at the Crown Agents), was in Jersey for the announcement. He told a Press Conference: "In giving advice the Crown Agents are conscious of the damage that can easily be done to the philatelic reputation of a country by considering only the possibilities of producing more and more revenue from stamp collectors. Most postal authorities throughout the world are also aware of this danger and it is regretted that in some countries financial

considerations are given greater weight than the needs of the postal services."

A delegation from the Postal Committee visited the Crown Agents in Washington D.C., (a department of the London agency), to discuss the way they operate. They also visited the Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corporation of New York and following the Committee's return in September 1968 the I.G.P.C. were awarded the contract for handling the stamps in North America.

Also in September Frank W. Guenier was appointed as the first Director and Head Postmaster for a period of five years, and in May 1969 Samuel Thomas was made Deputy Director and Controller of Accounts and Philately. A seven man committee was formed to control the postal services comprising Senator Wilfred Kricheski (President), Deputy Bob Smale (Vice-President), Senators S. Venables, C. le Maruand and P. Romeril with Deputies P. de Veulle and J. Ellis. This committee met monthly with sub-committees meeting weekly or occasionally bi-weekly, or in fact when ever required.

The Committee was aware that money was to be made from sales to stamp collectors because Deputy M. L. Thomas told local M.P.s: "The (postal) Committee had only a vague idea when it embarked on its task of taking over the Post Office of the tremendous interest which has been awakened over the world during the past few years in philately. The potential income which can be derived by a postal authority from the philatelic sales of stamps is enormous and the Committee is determined that Jersey should take its proper share of that income." In an earlier debate it was said that: "We have not taken into account what money would be made by stamps to keep in a collection. Financially this could be an important matter. . . . We have discovered that if a stamp market continues as present the Jersey stamps would mean an increase in the revenue of the Post Office."

It was decided in the summer of 1968 that an issue should be produced to commemorate the islands' postal independence, to be released concurrently with the definitive issue. The Post Office offered every budding artist the chance of designing this her first commemorative set.

An announcement was placed in the Jersey Evening Post of 1st August 1968 to this effect. The States Greffe forwarded a letter, (reference SPR/SJB 360/6/1(7)), to interested parties which acknowledged your letter and included the rules of the competition, which were:

"STAMP DESIGN COMPETITION"

Members of the public are invited to participate by submitting designs for the proposed issue. Prizes to a total of £100 will be awarded by the Postal Committee for the design(s) considered most suitable.

The following points should be noted:

1. Designs must be in full colour on cartridge paper of suitable substance, mounted on board.
2. The design must be contained in a rectangle size 3.96 inches by 6.56 inches. These measurements are four times lineal measurements of the design to appear on the stamps and designers should avoid small detail on their work which will only be

indistinguishable when reduced.

3. The design must include the following features: the name Jersey. A space for the value. Suitable wording to mark the first issue of stamps by the States of Jersey.

4. The designs may be prepared for reproduction by any of the following printing methods: (a) Photogravure; (b) Recess; (c) Lithography; (d) Recess and Lithography combined.

5. It is intended that the three special stamps will have a common design with different values, but artists may submit more than one design if they wish.

Two suggested ideas for the new stamps are:

1. A presentation of a selection of stamps issued by Jersey in the past.

2. A representation of the first pillar box which was installed in the British Isles and which was placed in the Parade, Jersey. Further details are available from the Societe Jersiasic."

The closing date for entries was 30th September 1968.

Designs submitted were considered by the Stamp Design Sub-Committee and from the 101 competitors total of 219 designs, 12 were shortlisted for submission to the full Postal Committee. These facts were conveyed in letter reference WGP/SJB/360/6/1(7).

In the middle of November 1968 all unsuccessful designs were returned to the competitors together with letter references SPR/SK/360/6/1(7) explaining that Mr R. G. Sellar had submitted the successful design.

Orders flooded in following the announcement to the Press on 2nd January 1969 of the designs and values, and it was soon realised that premises would need to be purchased by the summer at the very latest in order to cope. Consequently premises were acquired in St. Helier at 6a Colomberie on a seven year lease. A £3,500 a year expenditure was approved by the States Assembly for this purpose.

As vesting day drew nearer, close on £100,000 had been received in advance orders and hundreds of information packs had been despatched to potential customers who wanted to get in on the ground level of a new stamp issuing country.

It was hoped that the finished stamps would be ready for distribution to stamp dealers at least two months before the issue date. This was not to be, however, because Harrison and Sons were unable to complete the contract in time.

Press cards were distributed to editors of philatelic magazines and the lay press. The cards have the stamps stuck-on, one stamp per card, with 'JERSEY POSTAL ADMINISTRATION' and the Jersey crest at the top, and 'FOR PUBLICITY PURPOSES ONLY' at the foot of the cards. They were distributed in very limited quantities and forwarded by the Administrations' publicity agents before the issue date.

On 14th August 1969 Senator Kricheski announced to the States Assembly: "Today, agreement has been reached that as from October 1st the Sovereign and Parliament will relinquish their rights on the monopoly of the postal services." He then successfully proposed that: "The States Greffier, (Mr. A. D. le Brocq), should sign on behalf of the States of Jersey an agreement with the Postmaster General

(John Stonehouse) providing for the surrender as from 1st October, as regards Jersey of the exclusive privilege conferred on the Post Office by the Post Office Act of 1953."

The transfer document was duly signed on the following day.

In London an exhibition was held at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington to launch the Jersey, (and of course Guernsey), new stamps. It was opened on the 8th September by Lord Stoneham, (the Minister of State at the Home Office). Also present was Senator Krichefski and Claude Hayes (the Chairman of the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments). Meanwhile from 13th September until 22nd October across the Atlantic at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C. a similar exhibition was held. On the eve of opening almost 400 guests including the Postmaster General of the United States, Senator Spiro Agnew, together with representatives of the Jersey Government and Postal Committee attended a special function.

There was much controversy over the inclusion of a ½d value in the definitive issue as the ½d coin had been demonetised on 31st July and the stamp would only be available in multiples of two. Frank Guenier explained how the stamp came to be included: "Our ½d stamp was decided upon early last year (1968) when of course the ½d coin did have a value for postal purposes. Then it was decided that the ½d should be demonetised but by that time it was too late to stop printing this stamp and in any case it had been advertised in all our publications as part of the first issue". Most people accepted this explanation and few quibbled at having to pay a mere ½d extra.

When the 1st October eventually arrived hundreds of people queued throughout the islands' Post Offices, some having flown specially to post their First Day Covers personally. Others waited patiently for their postman to deliver the orders that they had placed by mail.

The States of Jersey Department of Postal Administration has since established itself as one of the most successful postal authorities in the world thanks to their conservative stamp issuing policy and by putting the customer first.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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